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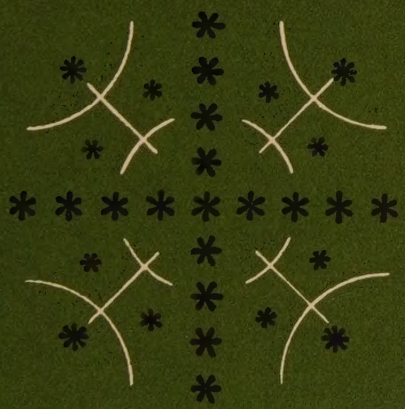

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An Introduction to Giacomo Leopardi's *History of Mankind*

GIOVANNI CECCHETTI

[One of the stated purposes of the *Italian Quarterly* is to bring to our readers those writings of Italian authors heretofore unknown or little known to the American public. This is particularly true of Giacomo Leopardi's prose works. Too often Leopardi's prose has been obscured by the fame of his poetry. It is with great satisfaction, therefore, that we publish a translation of his *History of Mankind*, preceded by an introductory essay.]

1

In 1824, at the age of twenty-six, Giacomo Leopardi was already the author of many scholarly works and, more important, of some of the finest lyric poems of his century, such as "L'infinito," "Alla Luna," "La sera del dì di festa," the "Ultimo canto di Saffo," and "Alla sua Donna." He had spent his adolescence and early youth in unceasing study and meditation, first writing learned treatises of amazing thoroughness and then concentrating primarily on the creative expression of his inner life, which he had the gift of immediately transposing into images of universal significance. The unswerving determination and relentlessness with which he studied had affected his physical development during his formative years, but at the same time seemed to have made his mental vigor still greater and keener. His meditations on life and on the unquenchable and always frustrating search for happiness which occupies the minds of men from birth to death, together with a tremendous

wealth of other observations — on literature, on philosophy, and on almost every field of human endeavor — were entrusted to a diary which he began in 1817 and continued for many years. This diary — problably the most massive and the most important we know — was called by Leopardi his *Zibaldone*, and it became the source of most of the material he subsequently used both in his poems and in his prose writings. The *Zibaldone* can thus be considered the autobiography of a great poet; not, however, an autobiography in the accepted sense of the word, but rather the history of his thoughts and of his observations on life and man, which becomes in turn the history of his own works.

Early in 1824 Leopardi began to write a book of dialogues and poetic prose that he called *Operette morali* ("Moral Works"). The twenty *operette*, which form the first edition of this book, and the first of which is the "History of Mankind," were all written consecutively in eleven months of constant work, but they had taken shape slowly during the preceding years. It was in January 1824 that the poet felt that some of the vast number of observations and ideas which had crystallized in the thousands of pages of his diary were ready to be organized into what he thought was to become a philosophical book and turned out to be, instead, a great work of literary art. The title — *Operette morali* — indicates the philosophical intentions of Leopardi, but it can be in no way understood literally. The *Operette* are "moral" only in the sense that any work of art is: a translation of the perpetual desire and disappointment, hope and despair of man into images of permanent value, and therefore a sublime, definitive, and universal idealization of such desire and disappointment, hope and despair.

If we look into the genesis of this book, we find that already five years before its inception Leopardi had said that he intended to write some "satirical dialogues in the style of Lucian"; this was on his part a literary aspiration

not only to imitate but to compete with the Greek master of satirical prose. Not much later, in 1820, he declared that he had already sketched some "satirical" pieces. The word "satirical" is the one most often mentioned in the early stages of the genesis of the *Operette*, and it is significant only in explaining why in many instances the poet chose the dialogue form which certainly came to him from Lucian. But there is very little in Leopardi's book that can be defined as purely satirical, as there is very little that can be considered purely philosophical: even his observations on life are usually not demonstrated, but simply stated through images, taken for granted; this owing to the fact that he was expressing his inner life in general terms and not theorizing in the abstract.

This leads us to another point, which is probably the most important premise to any reading of Leopardi. As all adolescents and all young men, in his early years he had dreamt of great achievements and of great happiness. The absolute and complete satisfaction deriving from great deeds and adventures was for him the main promise of life. But later, when he found that reality is always inferior to dreams, that desires often remain unfulfilled or, if fulfilled, do not bring absolute happiness, he became convinced that life consists in an alternating rhythm of dreams and disillusionment, in the unending search for something unattainable, which men call happiness. But if absolute happiness is unattainable, man can experience a measure of satisfaction through dreams and expectations *per se*. Thus the best moments of the week are those when people prepare themselves and wait for the holiday, not the holiday itself. A relative happiness is possible only when man abandons himself to his hopes and dreams without ever thinking that they will wither and fall as reality strikes them. Youth is the only beautiful season, for the young are possessed by such hopes and dreams. The future is always better than the past, as the vendor says in one of the *Operette morali*,

because we do not know the future, but we do know the past; if the past brought us only disillusionment and sorrow we can always imagine that the future will be different. And when the future has become past, we will dream of another future.

The man who thinks, however, and who is constantly aware of the realities of life — or who, in other words, *knows* that illusions will inevitably turn into disillusions — is totally barred from any kind of happiness, and the most he can achieve is a state of serene despair. He is the adult, the wise one who knows the truth, as opposed to the young, whose life is made up only of expectations. Unhappiness, therefore, consists in thinking, in the full knowledge of the starkness and unchangeability of reality; sorrow and despair are connatural with man, for man is the only creature endowed with the ability to think. This is the essence of what has been so often called the pessimism of Leopardi: something inescapable which coincides with truth itself.

At the center of Leopardi's work there is an incessant dialectical struggle between illusion and reality, with the latter having the upper hand. Life can continue if man succeeds in overcoming, or rather forgetting, the truth, by means of physical occupations and dangerous undertakings (Columbus in the middle of the ocean, after sailing for more than two months toward the unknown, cannot afford to spend his time thinking of the main problems of human existence) or, still better, by means of new dreams, and new illusions. They engage man's imagination, which alone can produce a measure of relative happiness.

The approach to life of Leopardi is purely poetic: it is not intellectual or philosophical, but emotional and "sentimental." His *Canti* are a sort of melodious elegy to the beauty of dead illusions in contrast with the brutal ruthlessness of reality that has killed them. His *Operette morali* were born of the profound need for giving a

conceptual basis to his thoughts, but fortunately they resulted in a different kind of poetry, written in prose rather than in verse.

What has been presented so far is the substance of Leopardi's vision of life; there are many facets to it, but they are often nothing more than corollaries of the main point. The "History of Mankind," which follows these introductory notes in a new translation, can be considered one of the best examples of the Leopardian dialectical struggle between illusion and reality, and it is at the same time unusual, for it reaches a completely unexpected and surprising solution.

2

In a note set down in his *Zibaldone* on January 16, 1821, Leopardi wrote, among other things: "Man... as long as he lives, unfailingly keeps re-hoping for that happiness for which he had lost hope... he keeps forgetting and disbelieving the harsh truth which had grown deeply rooted in his mind; and the greatest, most total and continual disappointment does not resist the forces of nature, which go on resurrecting illusions and hopes." This unquenchable yearning and hope for happiness is the main theme of the "History of Mankind," written almost exactly three years later. In this *operetta*, however, it is no longer stated, but portrayed through a stream of images that transform it from the mere realization of a fact into something extraordinarily alive.

The unending search of man is rendered by Leopardi not only in the narrative texture but also with the repetition of the "happiness," which is often accompanied by qualifications that make it more elusive and unreachable: at first it is almost present (a near "conviction"); then it becomes "incomprehensible," "inconceivable and impossible," and finally "unknown and

alien to the nature of the universe," and not even "understood" by the gods themselves. It is like a mirage which grows steadily more unreal. It resides almost exclusively in hopes and expectations, and consequently its becoming more and more distant is the effect of disappointments and loss of hope, which represent the counterpoint of the main theme, and also take various names: "discontent," "open tedium," "disdain of life," and "desperation." A quick reading of the "History" will show the interrelation of these two themes — which are in actuality only one.

The approach of the poet to the problem is already established in the first sentences. In the beginning all men were drawn to the contemplation of the earth and the sky and did not tire of marveling at them, for they appeared immense and very beautiful. They traveled to far away places to discover new things, and while doing so they experienced the near presence of happiness — the expectation of satisfying their insatiable desire to keep on seeing more. But then, when they found that there was nothing left to see or to discover, dark disappointment and "open tedium" took hold of their minds, and, feeling that life had nothing else to offer, they decided to seek death by their own hands. At this point Jove stepped in: since men wanted immensity, he enlarged the earth, created the sea, strewed the night with stars. He could not give them what they wanted, so he gave them "a living semblace of immensity," in order to foster and nourish their imagination. He did even more: he created the people of dreams, who were to beguile them into that happiness he could not give even if he wanted to. And man's spirit was "restored and uplifted."

Thus, the reasons for living are continually recreated by necessity and by circumstance. Jove, in the "History of Mankind," has the same function as the "forces of nature" in the passage from the *Zibaldone* quoted above. He provides the emotional ground on which to base life.

The successive stages of illusion and despair, of hope and "open tedium," are the equivalent of the alternation between emotion and rationality: if emotional forces make life possible, the perception of reality destroys it.

The "History of Mankind," as we can already see, is told from within, and not from without. Leopardi does not relate the actions of man, but his feelings, which are the determining factor of his actions as well. Meanwhile, he also tells the story of the growing up of mankind in general and of each man in particular: as a man gets older, he needs different, and less primitive, motives to occupy his mind. His imagination becomes more sophisticated, his desires more intense. He must be able, for instance, to imagine boundless and unexplored spaces, so that he can keep hoping to see them some day. Things are vast and infinite only if we cannot see them. Leopardi says in one of his poems that Columbus, by discovering America, rather than enlarging the world actually made it smaller, for once the realm beyond the ocean was known in all its details no one could imagine it freely any longer. We might add that the desire that man has always had to explore new fields of knowledge, or even to travel to other planets, when the earth has become too familiar, may to some extent prove Leopardi's point: not the known but the unknown stimulates us and keeps us alive.

The uplifting of the spirit of man through the creation of variety and the consequent "living semblance of immensity" did not, and indeed could not, result in a permanent state of mind. "In the process of time, when novelty again seemed completely lacking, tedium and disdain of life revived and reasserted themselves." It is another moment of realization and rationality, which generates the extreme reaction of impiety, and this in turn brings about the punishment of the Flood. Once the earth is repopulated, Jove, who remembers his previous unfortunate experiences, gives men all kinds of diseases

and fears and induces them to work hard in order to provide themselves with better food — not happiness, therefore, since it is "inconceivable," but all the worries and the preoccupations that make thinking of it impossible. This time we are at the stage where the only remedy is to be forced to avoid thinking of the fundamental issue. If what causes misery to the point of making man want death or rebel against the gods is rationality, he can find a sort of negative relief in being so busy as to have no time or energy to preceive the true nature of reality. Since this is only a little more than an external reason, and since man does not live by bread and toil alone, Jove provides him also with an inner motivation. He sends to earth "certain idols of the most exalted-seeming and superhuman appearance": Justice, Virtue, Glory, Patriotism, Wisdom, sensual Love, and others. They are living illusions and, in Leopardi's words, "the greatest gift" that the gods could make to mortals. They may be shadows and empty appearances, but they engage the emotional powers of man and give him a strong sense of purpose; consequently they represent the most effective means by which he can be distracted from succumbing to rationality.

Yet with the passing of time those idols reveal their inconsistency; men cannot help thinking and they desire Truth. Their request is answered, but in the face of Truth all the idols disappear, for Truth is their greatest enemy. Men now see reality; nothing appears to them "more profoundly true than the falseness of all mortal good and nothing more substantial than the hollowness of all things other than their own suffering." They are deprived of hope and of the "natural power of imagination," which alone could in some way satisfy their yearning for happiness. And their minds are aggrieved and smitten with "horror."

This is the moment of fullest rationality. Leopardi

identifies it with the so-called ancients, the Greeks, who were the discoverers of truth, in contrast with the youthful illusions that had nourished life until then. The counterpoint between hope and disappointment, illusion and reality, here reaches its apparent solution, with the victory of reality, that is, of the cognizance of what things are as opposed to what they seem to be. Men have become adults. Whatever sustained their childhood and adolescence has vanished, and they are filled with a sense of total emptiness. Only sensual Love remains in their midst, but the comfort they can derive from it is extremely limited.

On the basis of the other works of Leopardi and of his often-stated conviction that life offers no relief to the individual who exercises his intellectual capacity to think, we would expect the "History" to end with this complete negation of the possibility of achieving any measure of happiness. Yet the poet continues and reaches an entirely different conclusion which actually reverses the vision of life he had so carefully prepared. Victory will not belong to despair but to hope.

Something new at this point appears in the desert of human existence. The gods agree to let sentimental Love go and dwell among men from time to time. It happens very rarely, says the poet, that two people are thoroughly possessed by this Love, but in such rare cases the happiness of the mortals is very similar to that of the gods themselves. Love is eternally young, and wherever he dwells "he arouses and revives the infinite hope and the beautiful and dear fantasies" of the "tender years." All idols, all illusions, are resurrected, and Truth itself becomes utterly powerless, for love consists in recapturing the inner satisfaction of infancy, in living in a world of absolute imagination which cannot be touched by the harshness of reality. This is a state of serenely pure emotion, as opposed to the state of pure rationality brought about by the apparition of Truth.

The "History of Mankind" ends with the affirmation of the possibility of happiness: continual disappointment, tedium, and despair can be vanquished if one reconquers his lost hopes through love — the supreme illusion that lifts man permanently above reality. In the previous pages the poet had inexorably let all hopes fall under the hammer of truth, but only in order to present a far greater hope: one which becomes the very substance of life itself. Anything but desolate pessimism, as we can see.

But what is the nature of this love that Leopardi raises to such heights? It may be considered a blend of old concepts and of new ones, and therefore it spans and unifies the traditions of various literatures. It contains the distant admiration of Platonic love, the profoundly inspiring characteristics of the *stilnovo* love, and at the same time the sentimental attachment and the stirring devotion of Romantic love in its most idealized essence. But if in such a fusion of the old and the new the result is usually an entirely different kind of alloy, Leopardi actually seems to single out the most recent approach as preponderant, and by doing so he seems to accept the tenets of his century. Two months before composing the "History of Mankind" he had written in his *Zibaldone* that the spiritualization of things human was a recent phenomenon: "only in the past few years the love which with a new name, as if it were a new thing, is called sentimental, has become common for the first time — a kind of love of which the ancients had no conception." With such a statement the poet, who so often inveighed against the decadence of modern man in comparison with the ancients, admitted the superiority of the moderns and thus reversed his position — at least in one respect.

This particular attitude of his, however, must also be viewed in the light of another of his writings. In September 1823, four months before the "History," he wrote a *canzone*, "Alla sua Donna," in which he sang a hymn to a highly idealized lady, free of all frailties, a

spirit more than a human being, "the woman who does not exist," as he called her himself. It is a rather difficult poem because every element, every emotion, is transposed to an almost mystical level; it can be defined as the translation of a common longing into something above and beyond all earthly factors. The end of the "History of Mankind" must be read together with that poem. We may then realize that what motivates Leopardi is not love as it is generally understood, but the aspiration for an extremely refined emotional state in which communion blends with pure contemplation. Thus the "History" itself becomes more meaningful: from the beginning each paragraph, each word, leads up to those last pages in which the poet expresses his own yearning and spontaneously turns it into the yearning of all mankind.

3

The intricate texture of variations of the main themes gives the "History of Mankind" a musical construction — the last pages resembling the conclusion of a symphonic composition wherein all the previous motives are reaffirmed and brought to their resolution. But this musicality is apparent also in the single parts, inside the single sentences or groups of sentences, which always follow a pattern of rhythmic correlations. Leopardi was deeply imbued with the classical sense of proportion and perfection; he sealed whatever he wrote with the stamp of an expressive firmness that makes his poetry and his prose timeless and unalterable. The expressions he uses are always in absolute correspondence with the subject matter and with the human feelings he wants to represent. Every word, through a fusion of meaning and sound, creates vast visions; even a comma is carefully calculated to produce, or increase, echoes in the inner world of the reader.

The prose of the "History of Mankind" has the movement of an ancient melody and the fascination of an old fable; it tells the history of life with a sequence of rhythmic waves which pulsate one after the other until the last one stays on and remains in us. A detailed analysis would be very illuminating, but it would also require many pages. Of course, it would be difficult to do if the only point of reference were to be a translation. Yet even in a translation (and especially if it is a good one) some of the main characteristics of this prose can be easily perceived. From the first paragraph we are immediately filled with the sense of spaciousness evoked by the poet: all of mankind and the entire world are before our eyes. This feeling increases and becomes more defined as we proceed. Here is Jove while creating "a living semblance of immensity":

> He enlarged the earth on every side and poured the sea between the inhabited places... Many places he depressed, many he raised up, bringing forth the mountains and the hills; and he strewed the night with stars.

Or while giving men causes for fear:

> He created tempests of wind and storm-clouds, armed himself with thunder and lightning, gave Neptune the trident, sent comets whirling about, and ordained eclipses.

This Jove, who strews the sky with stars as if they were specks of dust, or sends forth comets and ordains eclipses, is indeed the image of the great creator of the universe — caught in the very act of creating by an extraordinary power of imagination which finds its concrete expression in words apparently simple, but actually extremely forceful and capable of containing an immense cosmic vision.

The appearance of the echo and of the roaring of the

forest in the wind are presented in phrases that repeat the wonder and astonishment experienced by men when they heard them for the first time:

> Along with the other expedients he had put into operation for that purpose, such as the sea, he now created echo and hid it in the valleys and the caverns and in the forests he set a hoarse and profound clamor and a vast undulation of the trees.

In the opening part external phenomena are always balanced with the inner world of man; later this inner world becomes necessarily exclusive and all-important. — But, to be fair to Leopardi, one should quote, and comment upon, almost all the "History of Mankind," and especially the closing section, so rich in intimate lyricism, with which the *operetta* culminates.

The "History of Mankind" appears here in a new translation for the first time in more than half a century. The translators have striven to preserve the qualities of the original, its melody and its rhythm. In my opinion, their English reproduces Leopardi's style as closely as possible, and I am sure that the reader will be fascinated.

Giacomo Leopardi's
The History of Mankind

It is said that all the men who peopled the earth in the beginning were created everywhere simultaneously, and all as infants; that they were nurtured by bees, goats, and doves, exactly as the poets fabled about the rearing of Jove. The earth was much smaller than it is now, the land almost all flat, the sky without stars, and the sea uncreated. Altogether there was much less variety and splendor in the world than is to be seen now. Nevertheless, men took an insatiable delight in observing and examining the sky and the earth and marvelled at them exceedingly. They thought them very beautiful, and not merely vast but of infinite extent and majesty and loveliness. Moreover, because they sustained themselves on the most joyful hopes and drew unbelievable pleasure from every single sensation of their lives, they grew up very contented and with a conviction almost of happiness. But after spending their childhood and early youth in this way and arriving at a more substantial age, they began to experience certain transformations. It seemed to them that the hopes whose fulfillment they had until then kept deferring from day to day, since they continued to lead to nothing, merited little trust. Yet it seemed to them impossible to content themselves with what they could enjoy in the present without anticipating any increase in well-being. This was particularly so because the appearance of natural things and the aspects of daily life eventually did not turn out to be as delightful and gratifying to them as in the beginning, either through habituation or because of a lessening of the original vivacity of their minds. They went about the earth

visiting the farthest places, which they could easily do because the country was flat and neither broken by seas nor encumbered with other obstacles. So that not many years passed before most of them noticed that the earth, though large, had definite limits which were not so broad as to be unencompassable, and that, except for very slight differences, all the parts of the earth and all the men on it were very much alike. These discoveries so increased their discontent that they were not yet past their youth when an open tedium with their own existence took universal hold of them. By degrees during manhood and increasingly in their declining years, when satiety became loathing, some of them reached such a pitch of despair that they gave up of their own accord, some in one way, some another, the light and life they in their early years had so much loved and were now unable to bear.

To the gods it seemed horrifying that living creatures should prefer death to life and that, unforced by necessity or any other contributing circumstance, life itself should become the instrument of its own undoing in any one of its creatures. Nor is it easy to convey how much they marvelled that their gifts should be considered so vile and loathsome as to cause others to do all in their power to give them up and reject them. For they thought they had endowed the world with so much bounty and delight, such provision and order, that it had become an abode not merely to be endured but to be loved by every animal and particularly by man, a species they had made with unique care into a marvel of excellence. Though they were touched with no little compassion for all the human misery revealed by the outcome, still, they also feared lest the repetition and multiplication of those grim examples should shortly cause the human race to perish, contrary to the decrees of fate, and thus deprive creation of the perfection lent to it by our kind, and themselves of those honors they received from men.

Jove found it advisable, therefore, to improve the

human condition and to give it greater means of happiness. Men, he understood, complained principally that things were neither immeasurably big nor infinitely beautiful, perfect, and various, as they originally thought, but instead were limited, imperfect, and uniform. They longed for the sweetness of their early years and fervently prayed to be returned to childhood and continue in it all their lives, lamenting not only their old age but maturity and even youth itself. Jove, however, could not satisfy this longing in them, since it was contrary to the universal laws of nature and to the functions and purposes which divine determination and decrees intended men to exercise and fulfill. Neither could he share his own infinity with mortal creatures, nor make matter infinite, nor give infinite perfection to things and infinite happiness to men. Nonetheless, it did seem to him proper to extend the limits of creation and to adorn and diversify it further. With this intent he enlarged the earth on every side and poured in the sea between the inhabited places so as to vary the appearance of things by cutting off the roads, thus preventing the limits from being easily discovered by men, while at the same time suggesting to men's eyes a living semblance of immensity. Then it was that the new waters took possession of the continent of Atlantis, and not of it alone but of countless other very extensive tracts, though of it only does there remain a particular memory surviving the multitude of centuries. Many places he depressed, many he raised up, bringing forth the mountains and the hills; and he strewed the night with stars. He refined and purified the quality of the air and increased the clarity and light of day. He intensified the colors of the sky and of the landscape and blended them with greater variety than before. He mingled the generations of men, making the old age of some coincide with the youth and boyhood of others. He decided that, since he could not satisfy them with the reality, he would multiply the semblances of infinity,

which men desired above everthing else. And since it was, as he understood it, to the virtue of imagination that they chiefly owed the great bliss of their childhood, he wished to foster and nourish it. Along with the other expedients he had put into operation for that purpose, such as the sea, he now created echo and hid it in the valleys and caverns, and in the forests he set a hoarse and profound clamor and a vast undulation of the trees. He also created the host of dreams and charged them with making visible to men, through different forms of illusion, that plenitude of incomprehensible happiness which he saw no way of reducing to actuality, and those intricate and undefinable fantasies any real counterparts of which he himself could not have produced even though he wanted to and though men ardently yearned for them.

Thus, through these provisions of Jove, man's spirit was restored and uplifted, and in all were renewed pleasure and love of life, as well as appreciation, delight, and astonishment at the beauty and immensity of terrestrial things. And this happy state lasted longer than the first, principally because of the distinction of time introduced by Jove in the matter of births, so that spirits chilled and wearied by experience were comforted by seeing the warmth and hopes of green youth. But in the process of time, when novelty again seemed completely lacking, tedium and disdain of life revived and reasserted themselves, and men were reduced to a state of dejection. Then, it is believed, originated the custom recorded in histories as a practice maintained by some ancient poeples, that when anyone was born, his relatives and their friends would gather to mourn him, and when he died, that day would be celebrated with festivities and orations congratulating the deceased. Finally, all mortals turned towards impiety, either because they thought they were not listened to by Jove or because it is the very nature of misery to harden and corrupt even the noblest

spirits and alienate them from honor and righteousness. They are entirely wrong therefore who think that human unhappiness was originally born of iniquity and acts committed against the Gods; rather, on the contrary, from their calamities did the wickedness of men stem, and not otherwise.

Now after the arrogance of mortals was punished by the gods with the Flood of Deucalion and vengeance for their offences had been taken, Deucalion and Pyrrha, the two sole survivors of that universal disaster of our kind, acknowledging to themselves that nothing could be of greater benefit to the human race than complete extinction, sat on the summit of a crag calling on death with irresistible longing, so little did they fear or lament the common lot. Nonetheless, being admonished by Jove to remedy the desolation of the earth and finding it unbearable to begin the work of generation, disconsolate and contemptuous of life as they were, they took stones from the mountains, as the gods showed them, and casting them over their shoulders they reestablished the human species. But what had happened made Jove aware of the true nature of men: that it cannot suffice them, as with the other animals, to live and be free of every physical pain and discomfort; rather that they always and in whatever condition crave the impossible, and the less they are afflicted by other evils the more they of their own accord torment themselves with this longing of theirs. He decided therefore to avail himself of new expedients for preserving this miserable species, and these were principally two. One was to mix true evils with their lives, and the other to involve them in a thousand activities and labors, with the sole purpose of occupying men and distracting them as much as possible from preoccupation with themselves, or at least with that longing of theirs for inconceivable and impossible happiness.

Thus he first spread among them a multitude of

diverse diseases and an infinite variety of other misfortunes; partly because he wanted to forestall satiety by varying the conditions and the fortunes of mortal life and, by contrast with the evils, to increase the value of their blessings; partly so that the shortage of pleasures should, to beings accustomed to worse things, prove much more bearable than it had in the past; and partly also with the intention of breaking and taming the wildness of men, of training them to bow their heads and yield to necessity, of bringing them to the point where they could more easily be satisfied with their lot, and of blunting the keenness and vehemence of longing in spirits enfeebled by bodily infirmities no less than by their own distresses. Besides, he knew it would happen that men weighed down by diseases and calamities would be less prompt than in the past to turn their hands against themselves, because they would be cowed and their spirits prostrate, which results from habituation to sufferings. And these sufferings, giving rise as they do to the greatest hopes, are also wont to bind men's spirits to life: for the unhappy have the firm convinction that they might be most happy if only they could recover from their misfortunes, which, as is the nature of man, they never cease trusting will somehow happen to them. Next he created tempests of wind and storm-clouds, and armed himself with thunder and lightning, gave Neptune the trident, sent comets whirling about, and ordained eclipses. By these means, along with other terrifying portents and phenomena, he decided to frighten mortals from time to time, knowing that fear and the presence of danger would reconcile not only the unhappy to life, at least briefly, but even those who would be more bent on fleeing it because they held it in greater abhorrence.

And to preclude their former indolence, he instilled in the human race a need and appetite for novel kinds of food and drink which they could provide for themselves only with great and difficult labor. For men quenched

their thirst with water only until the time of the flood and fed on herbs and fruits which the earth and the trees ministered to them naturally, and on other nourishment crude and easy to procure, such as some peoples, the California Indians in particular, use to sustain themselves even to this day. To different places he assigned different celestial qualities and varied likewise the portions of the year, which up to that time had been, invariably and in all the earth, so benign and pleasant that men had no need for clothing. They were, however, forced from then on to provide it for themselves and with great industriousness to counteract the changes and inclemencies of the weather. He commanded Mercury to found the first cities; to divide the human race by peoples, nations, and tongues, thus setting rivalry and discord among them; and to acquaint men with song and those other arts which because of both their nature and origin were and continue to be called divine. He himself established laws, states, and civil constitutions among the new peoples. And finally, wishing to favor them with an incomparable gift, he sent among them certain idols of a most exalted-seeming and superhuman appearance, to whom, in large part, he allowed direction and power over these people: they were called Justice, Virtue, Glory, Patriotism and other such names. Among them there was also one called Love, who like the others then first came to earth. For before the use of clothing not love but a carnal impulse, not dissimilar in men at the time from what it has always been in brutes, drove one sex toward the other in the same way that everyone is drawn towards food and similar things which are not truly loved but craved.

It was remarkable how much fruit these divine decisions bore for mortal life and, notwithstanding the toils, the fears, the sufferings—things previously unknown to our kind—how much the new conditions of men surpassed in comfort and pleasantness those that had existed before the flood. Indeed, to a great extent this

effect was produced by those marvellous apparitions who were reputed by men to be either genii or deities, and whom, for a very long period of time, men followed and worshipped with inestimable ardor and with immense and astonishing labor, fired to it with boundless energy on the part of poets and illustrious artist; so much so that a very great number of mortals did not hesitate to offer up and sacrifice their blood and their very lives, some to one and some to another of those idols. All this was far from displeasing to Jove; rather, it pleased him exceedingly, because along with other considerations he also thought that men would feel much less free to throw away their lives voluntarily the more ready they were to expend them on worthy and glorious causes. These salutary institutions greatly surpassed the preceding ones, even in duration. Indeed, by virtue of them human life had been, for a certain period in particular, almost joyful. And although after many centuries they fell into apparent decadence, nevertheless, even while declining and failing they were so effective that, until the beginning of an age not far removed from the present, life remained moderately easy and bearable, thanks to them.

The grounds and modes of their deterioration were as follows: the many ingenious devices disvovered by men in order to provide easily and quickly for their particular needs; the excessive increase in the original inequalities of circumstance and station instituted by Jove among men when he founded and ordered the first commonwealths; the indolence and futility which for those very reasons, after ancient banishment, once again took hold on life; the fact that in life, not only in actuality but also in men's estimation, the appeal of variety had lessened, as always happens with long familiarity; and then other graver matters which, because many have already described and made them known, need not be specified. Clearly, there was a renewal in men of that tedium with their affairs which had

distressed them before the flood and a revival of that bitter longing for a happiness unknown and alien to the nature of the universe.

But the complete reversal of their fortune and the final issue of that phase which we now usually call antiquity, came mainly from one cause different from those already mentioned, and it was this. Among the apparitions so esteemed by the ancients there was one called in their language Wisdom, who, universally honored like all her companions and specially followed by many, had contributed her share to the well-being of past centuries equally with the others. Time and again, indeed daily, she promised and vowed to her followers that she would show them Truth, a great spirit and her own master, who had never come down on earth but sat with the gods in heaven, and whom she promised, of her own authority and grace, she would draw down and induce to wander among men for some length of time. Through that association and familiarity mankind was bound to reach such a level that in depth of knowledge, in excellence of institutions and customs, and in happiness it would become comparable almost with the divine. But how could a mere shadow and empty appearance carry promises into effect, let alone bring Truth down to earth? After prolonged faith and trust in them, men came to see the vanity of those promises. At the same time they were famished for novelty, particularly because of the slothfulness with which they lived. And prompted partly, by their ambition to be equal to the gods and partly by the desire for that felicity which, according to the words of the idol, they supposed themselves to be about to attain by contact with Truth, they turned to Jove and in the most insistent and presumptuous voices demanded that he grant earth for a certain period of time the presence of that most noble spirit, charging that he was depriving his creatures of the infinite benefit they would derive from her presence. And along with this they

complained against the meanness and poverty of things, For those enticing apparitions, the source of so much good to past ages, were now held by most in little esteem, not that they already knew them for what they truly were, but that the common meanness of thought and almost no one followed them any longer. Therefore men cried out—wickedly cursing the greatest gift that the eternal gods had bestowed or would have bestowed upon mortals—that the earth was graced by none but lesser spirits, while it was not thought becoming or permissible for the greater ones, to whom more fittingly the human race might bow, to set foot on this lowliest portion of the universe.

Many things had long since renewed the alienation of the will of Jove from men, and among others the unparalleled vices and misdeeds which in number and grievousness far surpassed the wickedness avenged by the flood. Human nature had sickened him utterly after so much experience with it—restless, insatiable, immoderate human nature, whose tranquility, let alone happiness, he now felt certain no provision could achieve, no condition satisfy, no place suffice. Even if he had wanted to add a thousandfold to the spaciousness and pleasures of the earth and to the many-sided totality of things, to men, as covetous of attaining the infinite as they were incapable, all of this would shortly seem confining, unpleasant, and valueless. And in the end those foolish and arrogant demands so aroused the wrath of the god that putting all pity aside he decided to punish mankind forever, condemning it throughout all future ages to a misery much worse than in the past. For that purpose he decided to send Truth to remain among men not for a time merely, as they had demanded, but to make her eternal domicile among them, and removing those comely idols he had set here below, to ordain her the permanent arbiter and master of human beings.

The other gods were astonished at this decision; for

it seemed to them that it might result in too great an exaltation of our condition and jeopardize their own superiority. Jove freed them of this notion, however, by demonstrating that, aside from the fact that not all the genii, even the great ones, were in themselves beneficent, the genuis of Truth was not such as to have the same effects on men as on the gods. While to the immortals she made evident their beatitude, to men she would fully disclose their own unhappiness and continually hold it up to them before their very eyes, revealing it besides as not merely the work of fortune, but such that no chance or remedy would enable them to escape it or ever in life find respite from it. And since the greater part of their evils are evils only to the extent that they are believed to be by those who bear them and are more or less grievous according to the way men judge them, it is easy to understand what a great mischief the presence of this spirit will soon become to men. For nothing will appear more profoundly true to them than the falseness of all mortal good, and nothing more substantial than the hollowness of all things other than their own suffering. For these reasons they will be deprived even of hope, thanks to which, more than to any other pleasure or solace, they have endured life from the beginning until now. Without hope and seeing for their enterprises and labors no worthwhile end in view, they will arrive at such a state of indifference and abhorrence of all active, let alone large-minded, effort, that the customary ways of the living will differ little from those of the dead. Yet in this state of hopelessness and indolence they will not be able to prevent their inborn desire for boundless happiness from stinging and vexing them even more than in the past, since now they will be less involved and less distracted by variety in their pursuits and by incentive in action. At the same time they will find themselves deprived of their natural power of imagination, which alone could in some measure have realized for them this

happiness neither possible nor understood by me nor by those who themselves yearn for it. And all those semblances of infinity which I carefully put into the world in order to delude and sustain them according to their inclination with grand and indefinable thoughts, will have become inadequate and ineffective because of the knowledge and habit of mind they will have acquired from Truth. So that earth and the other parts of the universe, if they seemed small to them in the past, henceforth will seem minuscule, both because men will be instructed and enlightened concerning the mysteries of nature and because, contrary to their present expectation, the more informed they are the more confined things will appear to them. Finally, because the idols will have been removed from the earth and the teachings of Truth will have given men full cognizance of the nature of them, human life will lack all worthiness and integrity of thought and deed. The very names of nations and countries, let alone zeal and love for them, will be extinguished everywhere; and all men will gather, as they will be wont to say, into a single nation and country as in the beginning, and will profess universal love for all their kind; but in reality the human race will disintegrate into as many peoples as there are men. For having neither a country particularly to love nor foreigners to hate, each one will hate all the rest and love, among his kind, himself only. To relate how many and what inconveniences will result from this would be interminable. But even in such great and desperate unhappiness mortals will not of their own accord dare to quit the light of day, since the sway of this spirit will make them no less cowardly than miserable, and while adding beyond measure to the bitterness of their life, she will deprive them of the courage to reject it.

It seemed to the gods that if our lot, according to Jove's words, was going to be so harsh and terrible, it would not consort with divine compassion to consent to

it. But Jove continued, saying: They will, however, have some modicum of comfort from that idol they call Love, whom I am disposed, though removing all others, to leave in human company. Nor will it be given Truth, powerful though she is and continually embattled, ever to drive out or, except on rare occasions, to vanquish Love. So that the lives of men engaged equally in the worship of the idol and the spirit, will be split, and the two will between them have common sway over the affairs and minds of mortals. In most men, except for some unimportant few, all other intersts will diminish. Those weighed down with age will be compensated for their lack of the consolations of Love by the blessing of their natural disposition to be very nearly content with mere life, as befalls other kinds of animals, and to cherish it diligently for its own sake and not for any pleasure or comfort they may derive from it.

So having removed those blessed idols from the earth, excepting only Love, the least noble of all, Jove sent Truth to men and gave her permanent place and mastery among them. From this ensued all those grievous consequences he had foreseen; for a very astonishing thing occurred. That spirit had before her descent, when she had neither power nor right over men, been honored by them with a huge number of temples and offerings. Now, having come down to earth with regal authority and having begun to make her presence known, she, in contrast with all other immortals, who the more clearly they reveal themselves the more worthy of veneration they appear, so aggrieved the minds of men and struck them with such horror that, though forced to obey, they refused to worship her. And whereas the other apparitions were most revered and loved those beings over whom they most exercised their power, this spirit earned the fiercest curses and the deepest hatred from those over whom she held the greatest sway. But, nevertheless, being unable either to evade or resist her tyranny, mortals lived

in that supreme misery which until now they have endured and always will.

Yet compassion, which in celestial minds is never extinguished, moved the will of Jove not long since to pity so much unhappiness, and to pity especially the unhappiness of certain men distinguished by fineness of intellect, combined with nobility of conduct and integrity of life, who were, he saw, commonly oppressed and afflicted more than any others by the power and harsh dominance of that spirit. In ancient times, when Justice, Virtue, and the other idols governed human affairs, it used to be that the gods sometimes visited their creatures, now one, now another coming down to earth and manifesting his presence in various ways; and this had always brought the greatest benefit either to mortals in general or to some one in particular But life having been corrupted anew and sunk entirely in wickedness, the gods for a very long time disdained human association. Now Jove, pitying our extreme unhappiness, inquired whether any of the immortals might be disposed to visit, as they used to do of old, and to console their progeny in their great travail, those of them particularly who appeared in themselves undeserving of this general misery. When all the others remained silent, Love, the son of celestial Venus, corresponding in name to the idol so called, but in his nature, qualities and effects very different, volunteered (for his compassion is outstanding among the gods) to undertake the mission indicated by Jove and to descend from heaven which he had never before left. Since the council of the immortals held him so ineffably dear, they did not suffer him to depart from their company even for the shortest time; even though, deluded from time to time by the metamorphoses and various other deceptions of the idol of the same name, many of the ancients fancied themselves to have had indubitable signs of the presence of this highest of deities. But he did not begin to visit mortals until they were put under

the sway of Truth. And since then he is wont to come down only rarely and to remain briefly, both because of the general unworthiness of human beings and because it is only with the greatest uneasiness that the gods bear his separation from them. When he comes down to earth, he chooses from among the most generous and great-spirited people the tenderest and gentlest hearts, and there he dwells briefly, diffusing a rare and wonderful serenity and filling them with such noble feelings and with so much virtue and fortitude that they then experience—a thing wholly new for human beings—the reality rather than the semblance of perfect happiness. Only very rarely does he join two hearts together, encompassing both at the same time and instilling mutual ardor and desire, even though he is entreated to do so with the greatest urgency by all those whom he possesses. More than some few, however, Jove does not permit him to gratify, because the happiness born of this blessing is such that the divine itself surpassed it by too slight a degree. In any event, to be filled with his divine presence of itself transcends even the most fortunate conditions of any man in the very best of times. Around him on whom he lights whirl invisible to all others those stunning apparitions whom, though now barred from human intimacy, the God brings back on earth for this purpose. Since it is permitted by Jove, this is not in Truth's power to forbid, although she is most hostile to those idols and in her innermost being is greatly offended by their return: still, by the very nature of such spirits, it is not given them to withstand the gods. And since Love is endowed by the fates with eternal youth, consonant with this nature of his, he fulfills in his fashion the earliest entreaty of men: to be returned to the state of childhood. For in the spirit of those he elects to inhabit he arouses and revives, so long as he is there, the infinite hope and beautiful and dear fantasies of their tender years. Many mortals unacquainted with and incapable of

his delights scoff and revile him with unbridled audacity day in and day out, whether in his absence or in his presence. He, however, does not listen to their insults, nor would he exact any punishment for them if he did, so magnanimous and meek is he by nature. Besides, content with the vengeance they exact of the whole human race and with the incurable misery which afflicts it, the immortals do not trouble about the individual offenses of men. Nor are the fraudulent, the unjust, and the condemners of the gods specially punished in any way other than simply to remain what they are and thus to be alienated from the divine grace.

Translated by Gino L. Rizzo and Milton Miller

The Poet and the Politician

Salvatore Quasimodo

[The deep ideological divisions which characterize our society today render even more urgent the century-old problem of the relation between the poet and the men who hold political power. In the following reflections, Salvatore Quasimodo, a poet keenly aware of the problem, examines its implications and its meaning in terms of the poet's activity versus the politician's attempt to control it.]

"The night is long that never finds the day." These words of Shakespeare (*Macbeth* IV, iii, 228) help us to determine a condition of the poet. For the poet, in an early phase, his reader emerges from an image of his own solitude with the features and gestures of a childhood companion, perhaps the more sensitive of the two, steeped in secret reading but somewhat uneasy in judgment when confronted by an intended representation or disordering of the world attempted with words on which fall certain predetermined accents, as well as with rigorous measures alien to science.

To recreate a man is a denial of the earth, an impossibility of being, even though the greatest demand made of a poet is that he speak to many men and participate with them in certain harmonies drawn from the truth of things or of the mind. Innocence is sometimes a penetrating attribute; it permits extreme depictions of the perceivable. Indeed, the innocence of a companion who, dialectically, forces the first poetic rhythms into a logical pattern, will always remain a precise point of reference, a focus that permits the construction of half a parabola. The other readers are the ancient poets who

from an incorruptible distance look upon the new pages. Their models endure, and it is difficult to set others beside them.

The storyteller or novelist concentrates on men, imitates them, exhausts characters. The poet in his obscure sphere is alone with infinite objects, not knowing whether indifference or hope be his. Later on, that single countenance will be multiplied, those gestures will constitute figures, concurrences or dissents. This comes about with the publication of his first poems when the predictable alarms ring out because, it must be said again, the birth of a poet who from the secant of the literary circle attempts to reach the center always constitutes a danger for the established cultural order.

A strange public it is with which, at this point, the poet begins to have a silent, armed relationship: critics, professors in the provinces, literary folk. Most of these people, in the rational youth of the poet, will destroy his metaphysics and operate on his images; they are abstract judges, correcting, on the basis of shifting poetics, "mistaken" poems.

Poetry is also the physical person of the poet; yet though a depersonalization is not possible I shall not summon up private reminiscence in speaking of my country which, as everyone knows, has been replete in every century with figures such as Giovanni della Casa — that is to say, literati of metrical tidiness and mature competence. These christeners of traditions have clairvoyance and fantasy; they are also obsessed with allegories on the credible collapse of the world. They do not tolerate chronicles but only ideal figures and postures. For them the history of poetry is a gallery of ghosts. Polemics too is justified if one bears in mind that my poetic quest unfolded in a period of dictatorship and marked the origin of the cultural movement of hermeticism.

From my first book, published in 1930, to the second,

the third, the fourth (a translation of Greek lyrics which appeared in 1940), I was unable to perceive, through the political fog and the academic aversion to cruel forms of poetry distinct from classical compositions, anything but a stratified public of readers — the humble or the ambitious. My volume *Greek Lyrical Poets*, which initiated a truer reading of the classics throughout Europe, came indeed as something new to the literary generation of the time. Youths then, as I knew, wrote love letters quoting verses of my lyrics while other verses appeared on prison walls, scrawled by political prisoners. In such times did *I* write verses, did *we* write poems, to descend, without hope of forgiveness, into the bitterest solitude. Spiritual categories, verities? Traditional European poetry, still free, was unaware of our presence. The Latin province enslaved to Caesarism was preparing a harvest of blood, not lessons in humanism.

My readers were still the literati but there must have been others waiting to read my poems. Students, clerks, workers? Had I sought abstract verisimilitudes — the grossest of presumptions? On the contrary, my case exemplified how solitude can be broken. Solitude — "the long night" of Shakespeare, ill-endured by the public who were seeking a Tyrtaeus during the African or Russian campaigns — imposed itself clearly as a poetics, accepted in such forms as seemed to carry on European decadence and yet actually the first drafts of a neo-humanism.

War, I have always said, forces new measures on men of either country, the victorious and the vanquished. Poetics and philosophies are rent asunder "when trees and walls fall." It would be too facile to start over again, at the point interrupted by the first atomic shock, with the formal residues which once bound man to an age of decorum and phonetic virtue.

After the seething of death, even moral principles are subjects for debate, and the proofs of religion likewise. Men of letters who cling to the private issues of their

minute aesthetics are cut off from the disquieting presence of poetry. Out of the night — that is to say, out of solitude — the poet finds his day and inaugurates a mortal diary for the inert; the dark landscape yields to dialogue. Politicians and Alexandrians with their breastplates of symbols and their mystic purities affect to be unaware of the poet. It is a story that is repeated even as the cockcrow — indeed, even as the third cockcrow.

The poet is an irregular and does not penetrate the shell of a false literary culture full of towers as in the time of the Communes; he perpetuates his own forms even while seeming to destroy them; from the lyric he passes freely to the epic in order to speak of the world and of the meaning of anguish in the world — this through man, measure, and emotion. It is here that the poet begins to become a danger. The politician is mistrustful of cultural liberty and strives, working through conformist criticism, to immobilize the very concept of poetry, considering the creative art as outside of time and inoperative, as if the poet were not a man but an abstraction.

The poet is the summation of the varied "experiences" of the men of his time. He has a language which is no longer that of the *avant-gardes* but rather concrete, in the sense of the classics. On this point Eliot says that Dante's language is "the perfection of a common language... nevertheless the ' simple style ' of which Dante is the greatest master, is a very difficult style" (*Dante*, London, 1929). We shall have to insist on this language, which is not that of the Parnassians or the inventors of crises in the body of language in every country, wherever the influence of dialects merely creates further doubts and more literary hieroglyphs; for philologists will never be the renewers of the written language: this is a right that belongs to the poet. The language of poets is difficult not for philological reasons or for spiritual obscurities but in virtue of content. Poets

can be translated; but it is impossible to translate literati because they entrust to their intellectual handicraft the techniques of other poets and defend symbolism or decadentism through absence of content, through thought to be joined with other human thought, through truths on which they have nourished themselves in theory, recalling Goethe or the great poets of nineteenth-century France. What the poet does is to stay within his own tradition and eschew internationalism. The literati think of Europe or of the world as a function of a poetic which turns back on itself, as though poetry were an identical "object" the world over. Then, to their acceptance of poetics, formalism prefers some kinds of content and violently excludes others; but the problem, on either side of the barricade, always centers on the question of content.

Thus the word of a poet begins to beat hard on the heart of a man of any race, while the pure literatus thinks of himself as being in the world and of the poet as relegated to the provinces, his mouth split on his own syllabic trapezes. The politician uses the literatus, who has no contemporary spiritual position but rather one at least two generations out of date, and makes of cultural unity a game of knowing and turbulent disarrangements wherein in the religious factor may lead to further confinement of man's intelligence.

Religious poetry, civic poetry, lyric or dramatic poetry: categories of man's expression, valid only if the solicitation of formal content is valid. It is an error to believe that the conquest of a soul, or an individual and special emotional situation (a religious one, for instance), can by extension become "society." Ascetic discipline, man's renunciation of man, is but a formula of death. The "operative" spirit always falls into the wolftrap; its spoken discourse often depends on a mystique, on the freedom of the soul, which on earth finds itself a slave. And it terrifies its interlocutor (its shadow, a thing to be controlled) with images of physical decay, with a

complacent analysis of the repugnant. The poet does not fear death, not because he enters into fantasies of heroes but because death is a constant visitor in his thoughts and hence the very image of a tranquil dialogue. In the face of this detachment, the poet finds the depiction of man, who contains within himself a dream and a sickness and also a redemption from the squalor of poverty, which can no longer be for him a sign of the acceptance of life.

In order to realize the influence of the *politician* (and in this term we also include religious power), let it suffice to think of the silence of a thousand years in the fields of poetry and the arts after the end of the classical period, or of the great painting of the *Quattrocento*, a period in which the Church was the employer and as such dictated its content.

Formalistic criticism aims to strike at the concept of art on the basis of forms and expresses reservations on the consistency of content in order to operate on its autonomy in the absolute sense. In fact, poetry accepts neither the missionary efforts of the politician nor the intervention of a criticism which has its origins in any philosophy whatsoever. The poet suffers no deviations, moral or aesthetic: hence, at certain times, his double solitude with relation to the world and to the literary battalions.

Meanwhile, does a contemporary aesthetic exist? And from what philosophy may one obtain positive suggestions? An existentialist or Marxist poetry has not yet been punctually fixed on the literary quadrant. The dialogue or the chorus of the new generation presupposes a crisis, which is also a human crisis; the politician exploits this confusion to create those zones of illusory stability inherent in a fragmented poetry.

The dualism of the politician and the poet in a general sense has been clear in the cultures of all times; today the blocs that govern the world are creating contradictory codes of liberty, while it is clear that for

the politician there is only one liberty, moving in only one direction. It is difficult to break down this barrier which has stained with blood the history of civilization. There still exist at least two ways of considering cultural freedom: freedom in countries where a deep social change is taking place (as in the French Revolution, for example, or in the October Revolution) and freedom in other countries which resist a long time in their strongholds before consenting to modify their conception of the world.

Can there be any coordination between politician and poet? Possibly, where there are societies in process of formation; but never on the plans of absolute freedom. In the contemporary world the politician assumes various aspects but an accord with poet will never be possible since the one concerns himself with the internal order of man and the other with the ordering of men. In a given historical period the internal order of man may coincide with the desire to order and construct a new society.

Religious power, which very often identifies itself with political power, as previously noted, has always been a protagonist in this harsh struggle, even when its role seemed secondary. The reasons why a poet (a barometer of the morals of his people) becomes a danger to the politician are always the same as those of which Giovanni Villani speaks in his *Chronicle* apropos of Dante who, for his contemporaries, "was pleased in that *Comedy*, to scold and cry out, as poets will do, perhaps more than was proper; but it may be that his exile made him do so."

Dante, unlike Villani, does not write chronicles and to the exquisite hermetic lyrics of the *dolce stil nuovo* he will later add, without betraying his moral integrity, the violence of human and political invective, dictated not by his hates but by an internal and religious devotion to justice in a universal sense. Confronted by these verses burning in eternity, the aesthetes have been cautious, relegating them to the limbo of non-poetry. Lines such as "Trivia smiles among the eternal nymphs"

(*Paradise* XXIII, 26) have always appeared poetically more judicious than the vituperation of the Pisan or the liquid fire spilled upon the Florentines which for centuries burned the courtly city of Beatrice. Dante's poetry has given rise to suspicions in the name of its own greatness, and to this day the false cult of his memory is nothing but rhetoric, so limited is the audience of his human *Comedy*. Every nation has poets who belong to the same level of civilization as Dante: for example, Schiller for the Germans, Shakespeare for the English, Molière and Corneille for France, Cervantes for Spain, Dostoevsky for Russia — and for the time being let us leave the moderns in their armed serenity at different places on our globe.

The attempt to define, compare or differentiate the politician and the poet, these two "types" in the society of any era, has at all events been useful in establishing a condition which is at least historical. Were I to add to the names the attributive "man" I should thereby increase the specific intensity of the poet and reduce that of the other "type" to *homo politicus*, while by "politician" I mean the common denominator of a whole roster of political numbers, bound together, that is, by more or less equivalent ideologies.

No one is unaware of the function of a poet in the structure of a society, whether existent or in evolution. The importance of a Baudelaire, a Mallarmé or a Rimbaud as builders of a way of life in the French national structure is more evident to us today than it was to their contemporaries, when it could be thought that their poetry was only a sinuous literary *avant-garde*, the refraction of a language forced to yield to provisional lyric syntaxes. Does the politician recognize this active force of the poet in society? It would seem so and to buttress this it would suffice to mention the various forms of evasion or bondage of men of culture (and here I am obliged to repeat myself) in the society of a given time.

Creative intelligence has always been considered a

mortal contagion; hence the various justifications of literary patronage in mediaeval courts — the poems either chivalric or tamely heroic, the interminable flowering of madrigals — a patronage which has dragged on to the threshold of our own century when, by virtue of a reflex power of the intelligence, the middle class was creating its own state of freedom. Here someone might observe, going back in time, that Plato, as the architect of an ideal state, excluded poets from it, as being an element of disorder — or order, one should say, considering their potential for unhinging a society set up on anti-democratic foundations; but the ostracism of the philosopher was only another form of evasion.

Is the poet free today? He is free, depending on the societies that give him expression, either the continuer of pseudo-existential illuminations, or the decorator of placid human emotions, or one who, out of political fear or inertia, refrains from descending too deeply into the dialectic of his time. Angelo Poliziano in the fifteenth century was, for example, free when in his *Stanze per la Giostra di Giuliano de' Medici* he cautiously makes a nymph, confused amid secular ladies, attend Sunday mass. But not so Leonardo da Vinci, a writer of different genius. With him freedom assumes its real meaning, which is consent on the part of political power — a consent that allows the poet to enter into society unarmed. Nor were Ariosto and Tasso free, nor the abbé Parini, Alfieri or Foscolo — the rhetoric of those sacrificial victims sets them in the historical context as the voice of man which seems to cry in the wilderness and instead corrodes the non-truth.

But is the politician in his turn free? No. In fact, the very castes that besiege him decide the destinies of a society and also have their effect on dictators. Around these two protagonists of history who are not free and who are adversaries (we include as poets all significant writers of any given era) passions swirl and clash and there is no

peace save during a revolution or a war—the former bringing order, the latter confusion.

The last war was a collision of systems, of policies, of social orders, nation by nation—a violence aimed at twisting even the minimal freedoms. It is precisely in the internal resistance to a hostile and familiar invader that a sense of life reappears. It was a resistance of culture and peasant humanism that "raised its head in the harsh fields," as Virgil says, against the powerful.

From this armed movement there emerges in every nation a cultural current that is not merely temporary, as the trustees of eternal mortgages on a static civilization believe. I insit on saying "not temporary" because the nucleus of contemporary culture (including existentialist philosophy) is oriented not toward the disasters of soul and spirit but toward an effort to knit together the broken joints of man. It is neither fear, nor absence, nor indifference, nor impotence that will give the poet words to communicate to others a non-metaphysical destiny.

The poet may well say that man begins today. The politician can say or does say that man has always been, and can always be, entrapped by his moral cowardice—a cowardice which is not congenital but which has rather been implanted by centuries of gradual attrition.

A truth hidden in the impenetrable attitudes of political wisdom suggests a tentative conclusion: that the poet can speak only in the intervals of barbarism. The Resistance is a moral certainty, not a poetic; nor does the poet out of his substance manipulate words in order to castigate someone. His judgment is of a creative order; it may not be formulated in a decalogue to invent "vaticinations."

The people of Europe know the measure of this Resistance; it is truly the golden section of modern conscience. The enemy of the Resistance is today, for all his sound and fury, only a shadow protected by a weak law: his voice is more impersonal than his intentions. The

sensibility of the people is not deceived as to either the condition of the poet or that of his adversary. When the antithesis grows, poetry replaces the subordinate thinking of the politician, who would make of poetry an idea to be extinguished or exploited.

The Resistance is the perfect image of the conflict between today and yesterday. The language of blood is not only drama in the physical sense, but it is also a conclusive expression of a continuing arraignment of man's moral "technics." Europe was born of the Resistance and the indeterminate figures, once worshipped, of an order that the war was striving to establish, have been obliterated. Death has an autonomous sleep; the attempt to arouse it through logic or political cunning is inhuman. The loyalty of poetry is delineated in a presence beyond injustice and beyond the intent of death. The politician wants man to learn how to die with courage; the poet wants him to live with courage.

While the poet is aware of the power of the politician, the latter takes cognizance of the former only when the poet's voice penetrates deeply into the various strata of society; that is to say, when content as well as form are revealed in the lyric or the epic. From this moment the underground struggle between politician and poet begins. In history the names of exiled poets emerge as human dice while the politician, verbally defending culture, in fact tries to diminish its power. His sole purpose in all centuries has been to do away with three or four freedoms fundamental to man in the eternal cycle of his quest to retrieve what has been forcibly reft from him.

In our time the defense of the politician *vis-à-vis* culture, and therefore *vis-à-vis* the poet, is carried on either openly or obscurely along many lines. The simplest is through the degradation of the whole concept of culture. Radio and television, those mechanic-scientific media, help him shatter the unity of the arts in order to promote artistic creeds that hardly trouble even shadows. The

poetics associated with the echoes of literary academies are always preferred, in order creatively to disparage our own times. It is this sense that Aeschylus's verse, "I say that the dead slay the living" (which I have made the epigraph of my latest book *The Incomparable Earth*), is to be understood. In this book earth is the likeness of man. And if to speak of man's intelligence constitutes a sin, we may then say that religious powers (the adjective "lay" which qualifies intelligence is meant to define its intrinsic value) exceeds its proper sphere when it brings its strength to bear on the humble and not upon the internal fire of individual conscience.

The degradation of the concept of culture forced upon the masses, who are thus persuaded to believe that they have had glimpses of the paradises of wisdom, is not merely a modern political phenomenon; but the technique employed for the manifold dispersal of the meditative interests of man is new and quicker in effect. Optimism has become tangible; it is now merely a memory contest. Myths and fables (the suspense of the supernatural, shall we say) are degraded into thrillers. They take on visual metamorphoses in the cinema or in the epic tales of pioneers and criminals. So any alternative between politician and poet is excluded. The irony of "worldly circles," which is sometimes a facet of manufactured indifference, confines culture to the dark corner of its history, affirming that the *picture* of the conflict is dramatized and that man and his sorrow have been and will remain in their customary enclosure today and tomorrow even as always in past history. Certainly. But the poet knows that there is a drama, an intensification of drama. He knows that the flatterers of culture are also its fanatical incendiaries. The *collage* of scribblers, superimposed on any regime, corrupts at the periphery while at the center literary cliques court eternity with pallid exercises in spiritual calligraphy and glosses of their impossible life of the mind. In particular moments

of history culture unites secretly against the politician. It is a temporary unity and it serves as a battering ram to break down the doors of dictatorship. Such a force indeed asserts itself under every dictatorship when it coincides with the quest for elementary human freedoms. Once the dictator has been defeated this alliance disappears and the factional cycle begins anew.

The poet is alone. Around him rises a wall of hatred built of stones cast by literary marauders. From this wall the poet observes the world without going forth into the public squares as the minstrels did or even into "worldly" society as the literati do. But from that very ivory tower, so dear to the tormentors of the romantic soul, he arrives among the people not only in their emotional needs but in their intimate political opinion.

This is not rhetoric. The silent siege of the poet is all of a piece in every nation and through all the chronicles of humanity. But the literati who side with the politician do not represent the entire nation. They only serve, I repeat, they "serve" to delay for a few moments the poet's voice in the world. "In time," as Leonardo said, "every wrong is righted."

Translated by Thomas G. Bergin
and Sergio Pacifici

The Influence of Machiavelli on the Neapolitan Intellectual Leaders of the Risorgimento

Armand DeGaetano

[The centennial of Italian Unification, being celebrated this year, has brought forth a vast number of studies on the Risorgimento. (See *Italian Quarterly* Nos. 17-18 for a bibliography of works recently published in Italy on the subject.) Professor De Gaetano's article illustrates a specific aspect of the period as it manifested itself among the Neapolitan intellectuals.]

On March 17 in 1861 the first Parliament in Turin proclaimed Italy a united nation. By many observers the unification of Italy is still regarded as an historical miracle, and in some respects it was, in a purely figurative sense. It is difficult to imagine how a group of peoples who had resisted unification for so many centuries should have achieved political unity in such a relatively short span of time. But history is not made in a vacuum, and to disregard the slow underlying cultural forces that contributed to the political unification of Italy would result in an incomplete understanding of the historical event known as the Risorgimento.

What was the nature of the cultural forces that had operated for centuries in creating some degree of communal feeling? They were predominantly literary, artistic, and linguistic forces. The Italians of the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the Risorgimento were quite a different people from their Roman ancestors. Despite this fact they persisted in identifying themselves with

the glories of ancient Rome. History showed plainly that the natural course of events favored the establishment of independent states, yet Dante, Petrarch, Rienzi, and other dreamers still aspired to a reëstablishment of the Roman Empire. Anachronistic as this was it still remained the common goal of some Italians.

As to the linguistic and literary factors, by the 15th century Tuscan had been generally accepted as a common language for poetry, and by the 16th century the same was true of prose. This was not and still is not the case with the spoken language. In short, the Italians were unified by the written language and identified themselves with Rome, Dante, Petrarch, Da Vinci, Michelangelo, Galileo, and other outstanding figures.

As for the origin of a national political consciousness the facts show plainly that before the Risorgimento there had been nothing more than a few voices in the wilderness. There had been a heroic resistance at the Battle of Legnano and at a more local level there had been several manifestations of vigorous unity in time of crisis. But all this had ended by 1530 with the Spanish occupation.

There were, however, some important political issues indispensable to unification which can be traced all the way from Dante to this century. Dante, to be sure, was far from being a nationalist, but as a proponent of the separation of the Church and state he entertained a goal which was not officially reached until 1929 when the Pope renounced all rights to temporal power. Petrarch perhaps more than anyone else worshipped the glories of ancient Rome and dreamed of restoring her as the capital of the world. In his famous *canzone* in which he exhorts the heads of the Italian city states to stop fighting with each other and save Italy for the Italians he goes so far as to write "Italia mia". These are rare and significant words, but these and the rest of the words in the *canzone* are not enough to support the popular idea

that Petrarch was thinking of political unity in the modern sense of the word. Yet Dante and Petrarch, along with Machiavelli and many others, were hailed during the Risorgimento as champions of Italian independence and unification.

I want to stress at this point that we are dealing with the apostles of freedom, not dilettants. The leaders of the Risorgimento did not study history or literature for purely scholarly reasons, but in order to help them achieve their goal. They lived what they read, and their interpretation was naturally subjective. The literary critics of that time saw the Risorgimento as the final outcome of a continuous process of Italian thought which had aimed at the same national objectives the Italian patriots of the revolution were fighting for. Today we realize that this interpretation of the history of Italian literature was subjective and very much exaggerated, to say the least. But men like Settembrini and even De Sanctis were convinced that it was otherwise and they in turn convinced their students. The historical fact, therefore, is that Dante, Petrarch, and Machiavelli actually did play the role of Italian patriots at a time when it mattered most. Therefore, beside the purely cultural influence there is also a political influence that was exerted by great Italian figures of the past through sheer misinterpretation of their writings. That the enthusiasm of the leaders of the Risorgimento should have led them to project their own interests onto those of Italian writers of the past in quite understandable. But the point which concerns us is that this misunderstanding produced an actual and positive political influence.

The case of Machiavelli is unique. In *The Prince* and the *Discourses* (XII) he actually speaks of a unified Italy and at the end of the former he becomes very eloquent on the subject of independence. His influence, however, like that of other Italian writers of the Renaissance, is more romantic than intellectual. Despite the reevaluation

of Machiavelli's thought made by Hegel and Fichte, and despite De Sanctis who had profited by the interpretations of the German school, Machiavelli was still regarded as a villain, though hailed as a great patriot and hero. Even Francesco Fiorentino, one of the very few who understood Machiavelli, wrote: "Just to see Italy unified, Machiavelli would have left it even in the hands of a Caesar Borgia." But what was foremost in Machiavelli's mind was not Italy; it was the effective politics of Borgia.

The European mind in general, Bismarck excluded of course, was oriented about the rationalistic doctrines of the period of the Enlightenment. With the possible exception of Cavour who did not always shudder at Machiavelli's realistic concept of political action, and sometimes, but only sometimes, actually employed Machiavellian tactics, the leaders and heroes of the Risorgimento had little understanding of Machiavelli's politics. They did not conceive the game of politics as an interplay of actions independent of moral preoccupations, but were on the contrary concerned with moral issues. Generally speaking, this frame of mind typified both the followers of Cavour and those of Mazzini, and included Manzoni, Garibaldi, Ricasoli, and most national figures throughout Italy.[2]

And now for a more specific analysis of the influence of Machiavelli on the political and intellectual leaders of the South. As the period of the Risorgimento progressed intellectual leadership gradually shifted to the South (with Naples as the center), embodied in such figures as Francesco De Sanctis and Bertrando Spaventa. By 1860 the South became the center of the most significant and revolutionary forces of Italian politics. Ten future prime ministers were active in this center.[3]

During the first half of the nineenth century a few journals like the *Progresso* of Naples (1932) began to disseminate Hegel's philosophy which found among the Neapolitan patriots its most faithful exponents, often

referred to collectively as the Neapolitan Idealistic School. Being idealists, their position on question of politics was antithetical to Machiavelli's, but with him they did have in common the modern concept of the state as a united and independent nation. The importance of this movement lies in the struggle for autonomy and for the absolute authority of the state, and in the unitary result that came of it. The exponents of this movement were called worshippers of the state. Unlike Machiavelli's, their whole political thought was based on ethics. They defined the ethical good as a willed activity which produces a common willed good.

The men who made up the nucleus of this group were the leaders of the Partito Moderato, known also as the Liberal Party of the South. They may be considered as the descendants of the supporters of the short-lived Repubblica Partenopea of 1799 and as representing a small class of property owners, limited by the same ideas and possessed of the same interests as the champions of that ill-fated Neapolitan republic. Their ethical preoccupation stemmed from the fact that they owned most of the wealth and had the most to lose. As members of the richest class they were naturally interested in a strong, well organized government capable of protecting civil rights and property.

With the life of their fellow citizens they had little in common; their general attitude toward the people was contemptuous, and there is no evidence that they made any effort to understand the problems of the masses. The political principles of this wealthy class derived from abstract rather than concrete thinking. They preferred to follow the middle road. They were opposed to armed force and underground action, not because, like Machiavelli, they had no confidence in secret plotting, but because of a natural aversion to violence and to any action that did not follow a moral, reasonable, and legal procedure.

There are, however, some exceptions. Gabriele Pepe, for one, is eloquent in his opposition to abstract formulas.[4] His writings reveal a realistic point of view and a much more mature understanding of Machiavelli than can be discovered in his compatriots. In one of his articles in 1831 he affirms the dynamic aspect of history and its practical function in politics, that war is a continuous and inevitable phenomenon and that harm is the only thing that can be expected from foreign rulers and foreign armies. He says: "We must always impress upon our young Italians to study politics not from abstract ideologies but from history as did our great Machiavelli... Half a page of his *Discourses* is worth more than the thousand volumes of abstrusities that are being published abroad."[5]

The leader of the Idealistic School was Francesco De Sanctis, the greatest Italian literary critic and the intellectual father of Benedetto Croce. De Sanctis, better than any of his disciples, understood Machiavellian politics and sometimes followed it, subjecting himself to severe criticism, as when he changed from the Right to the Left Wing Party. More than anyone else De Sanctis in his teachings affirmed the conviction that Italian independence from foreigners and Church was an ideal the patriots shared with Machiavelli. Speaking of Machiavelli De Sanctis says: "His conscience is not empty. It throbs with the desire for freedom and the independence of the fatherland. The image of Machiavelli reaches us... surrounded by a poetic halo for its temper and sincere patriotism."[6] Despite his bestowal of these halos which ill become the astute head of the Florentine, De Sanctis upheld the fundamental principles of Machiavelli's politics and his concept of history. But the clear explanations by De Sanctis were not well understood. The Risorgimento could not or would not see that having been stated in scientific terms politics had acquired a logical function and a purely amoral character. "Machiavelli,"

says De Sanctis, "has not been judged on his logical and scientific value, but on his moral value." His logic is based on the "coherence between the means and the end." The Neapolitan critic impressed his students with the proposition that history is the result of human passions and interests and, like Guicciardini, criticized Machiavelli for neglecting the variable factors of time and place which contradict Machiavelli's notion that history repeats itself.[7]

De Sanctis was convinced that in due time politics would become more humane and envisaged progressive dependence among nations that would lead to a world federation of states united by a common goal.[8] The mission which De Sanctis assigns to Machiavelli is all bound up with his own ideals and is presented as a program for the reconstruction of a new Italy. He writes: "Life is not a game of the imagination and it is not contemplation, theology, or art. On earth life has its seriousness, its purpose, and means: to rehabilitate life, give it a purpose, remold its conscience... This is the spirit that pervades all the works of Machiavelli."[9]

More than anything else, the realism of Machiavelli had a positive effect on De Sanctis' theory of education. Like Machiavelli, De Sanctis is averse to any mental activity of little effectual value in real life. Learning had to have a real purpose, and the greatest purpose before them was to create an Italian nation. Echoing the words of Settembrini he shouted, "La scuola è la vita!" as he ran with his students to the barricades in 1848. Later, as minister of education, he based his program on these ideas.[10]

De Sanctis' enthusiasm for Machiavelli as a symbol of the Italian cause was contagious, but his interpretation of the substance of Machiavelli's politics is not widely or deeply reflected in the writings and actions of his Italian contemporaries.

In the Poerio clan, one of the most distinguished

families of patriots in the South, the first to argue in a Machiavellian vein and to become aware of the errors of the Liberal Party were Raffaele and Alessandro who mistrusted the Bourbons and foreigners in general. In one of his letters (1824) Raffaele points out that much of the success of the Bourbon dynasty was due to its employment of Machiavellian tactics. "This," he says, "shows that they have read Machiavelli much better than we and know now to employ his maxims. We have been humane and generous, or just plain fools, which seems the more appropriate title we deserve."[11]

Most realistic of the Poerios was Alessandro who died fighting for the independence of Venice in 1848. In his poetry and prose he quotes both Machiavelli and Petrarch. As a leader he exhibited a Machiavellian distrust for mercenary armies, being convinced that the new state could be formed only by a bloody and hard fought war by the Italians.[12]

Despite these early signs of a tendency toward the realism of the old Italian political school, Hegelian idealism and eighteenth-century rationalism were to dominate the thinking of intellectuals and political leaders in the South even after 1870. The failure of the Liberal Party which gained control in 1848 has been attributed to its aversion to political realism. One may say that Carlo Poerio, the head of the party, and his ministers did almost everything contrary to what Machiavelli describes as effective for maintaining a new government. They were weak, indecisive, incoherent, they failed to judge their own strength, and gave too much freedom to people who were not used to it.[19]

Croce points out that the truly political action in the South which contributed to the creation of an Italian nation took place when Carlo Poerio helped, from his prison cell, in "the transformation of the Neapolitan Liberal Party into an Italian Party" which opposed the Bourbons in favor of the House of Savoy. It was then

that the Liberal Party became less ethical in character and more effective.[14]

What has been said about Carlo Poerio also applies to most of his compatriots. His cousin, Vittorio Imbriani, was even more unrealistic as a political leader. He had, however, studied Machiavelli under De Sanctis and in his writings there are moments when he remarks in a rather Hegelian tone that in real life one cannot always move about unprotected. He distinguishes between the evil which engenders evil, and the evil which engenders good, and which is in essence something good. "Oh, *foelix culpa!*" he exclaims.[15] The logic of this thesis is questionable, but it is the only basis on which the Idealistic School sometimes admitted the Machiavellian concept of the necessity of being ruthless in times of crisis in order to achieve an end for the common good. On military questions he exhibits a more intimate knowledge of Machiavelli. In commenting on the employment of forces and decrying the mildness of nineteenth-century warfare, Imbriani quotes some of Machiavelli's basic doctrines on the art of war, which assert that religion has rendered war milder and less effective.[16]

In addition to the concept of the priority of state over individual another point on which the members of the Liberal Party were in complete agreement with Machiavelli and all the great Italians of the past from Dante on was the question of Church and State. The Church was the enemy of unification and independence, and the Liberal Party always remained hostile to the Church, except in 1848 when it joined the Catholic Party for purely political reasons.

The contempt of Arnaldo da Brescia, Dante, Machiavelli for the temporal power of the Church is rekindled in patriots of both North and South.[17] Over this issue the Italians had killed a Pope (Lucius II in 1145).

Some of the strongest criticism against the Church is found in the writings of Luigi Settembrini. For him Roman Catholicism was the negation of Christianity. As a teacher, his chief concern was to train his students to conspire against the Bourbons and the Pope.[18] Being by temperament the antithesis of Machiavelli, Settembrini had no understanding of Machiavelli's contribution to political science, even though he said, "I would like the Italians to speak like Machiavelli and act like Ferruccio."[19] According to Settembrini the lesson which Italians must learn from the great Florentine devil is his ideal of a united Italy free from foreigners and the clergy. He presents Machiavelli as a source of inspiration to patriotism and unification, and would like us to believe that this was the only force that inspired him to write his political works. Were it not for his love for a united Italy, Machiavelli, according to Settembrini, would be a monstrous formulator of deceptions. "Do not consider an abstract state, but a state Machiavelli wanted to establish in Italy, and his whole thought will become sublime: it is a great courage that employs all the power of evil to achieve a great good... *Questo pensiero governa tutta la sua vita* (This thought dominates his whole life)." So says Settembrini in his *Lezioni di letteratura italiana.*[20]

Now there is no question that this subjective interpretation had a real influence on Italian unification: I believe, however, that Machiavelli's political works must be judged apart from any national ideal or any incident that may have provoked or inspired a few pages. Truth is an end in itself, and not a means to an end, and the end of Machiavelli's works is, What is politics?

In affirming the sovereignty of the state, Settembrini, like his fellow conspirators, points to Machiavelli as the main authority. Like most of his contemporaries Settembrini interpreted the history of Italian literature as a gradual development of a national political conscience

and regarded the Church as an obstacle to all forms of expression.[21]

Another admirer of Machiavelli was Luigi La Vista, who died fighting for liberation in 1848. His interpretation of Machiavelli as an historian is more mature than Settembrini's and reveals the influence of his teacher De Sanctis. He idealized Plato but also recognized Machiavelli as the founder of political science and as a keen observer of human nature. He says, "Once we understand men as they really are, we cannot escape from them as Rousseau does, or despair of them as Leopardi does; we must govern them with their own weapons, as Machiavelli does."[22]

The greatest authority in Italy on the Hegelian concept of the ethical state was Croce's uncle, Bertrando Spaventa. I have looked through all his printed works but have found no mention of Machiavelli except in a letter where he refers to him only in passing. This cautious silence can only be attributed to a desire to avoid a dispute on the moral question which was inevitable for anyone who wrote on Machiavelli.

Judging from his writings it is plain that Spaventa did not see or did not accept the amoral character of politics in the Machiavellian state. The exponents of the *stato etico* aim at the attainment of a state of conscience which identifies the particular with the common good. Therefore, an action is ethical only when the individual acts with the conviction that what he does is good for him only insofar as it is good for all. Reality in the state is the realization of a universally willed good.[25]

For these idealists truth is not the effectual kind conceived in the Machiavellian sense as the effect of passion, ambitions, calamities, and human necessities, but a truth that is born of reason. For them the state is a rational entity, not a natural one as it is for Machiavelli. They postulate that the faculty to live ethically is immanent in human nature. Therefore, the community

exists in the individual and is neither an effect nor a cause, but a manifestation of an essential characteristic of humanity.[24] Their concept of the state as a force and organic activity is no different from Machiavelli's. Structurally, both derive from Aristotle. The real difference, and this will ever remain the problem, is the stress on what should be and what is. However, the idealistic view which conceived that state as a sovereign, autonomous, and subjective personality[25] represented a powerful force which helped to overcome those factions that were opposed to unification and helped to subordinate both regional and municipal interests to the national interests.

Bertrando Spaventa was a professor of philosophy, his brother Silvio was mainly a politician and as such sought in Hegelian philosophy its practical value. He had studied Machiavelli from the time he was a young man and often quoted him in his writings and in his speeches in connection with the need for the centralization of power and the unity of purpose and action in the creation and maintenance of a new state. "Il Machiavelli diceva che gli Stati nuovi che sono deboli, si perdono," he shouted to the other members of Parliament.[26] Mindful of Machiavelli's counsel he advocated a strong and well disciplined army that could fight alongside her French ally.[27]

He was opposed to rationalistic tendencies and like Machiavelli recognized the necessity of a dynamic policy that reflects real needs and possible exigencies suited to quick and energetic action, "idee vive e bisogni reali," Silvio wrote.[28] He believed that the liberal policy of the new government toward a people unaccustomed to freedom had encouraged the growth of brigandage, the Camorra, the Mafia, and other forms of corruption. Like his contemporaries, Silvio Spaventa hails Machiavelli as an enemy of the Church and a champion of Italian

nationalism. The Church, regionalism, and municipalism were to him the greatest obstacles to unification.[50]

Another member of the Idealistic School whose essay *Il Sovrano* aroused the sarcastic criticism of Giosuè Carducci was Angelo Camillo De Meis. Carducci had not understood a thing De Meis had written. For De Meis, a disciple of Bertrando Spaventa, the state does not soar to divinity as it does for his teacher, but is regarded as a natural organism and as such it must remain outside the ambit of philosophy and absolute truth.[51] The earthly sovereign, *il sovrano in atto*, of De Meis wears a Machiavellian cloak, and acts as mediator between the people and the philosophers. In order to reconcile these two elements of society, that is, the scum and those who have an ethical conscience, the sovereign must be practical and cunning. As he says, "The man of the hour is neither the most virtuous nor the wisest, but the one with whom the masses have something in common." The presence of so much scum makes Machiavellian politics indispensable. Therefore, the sovereign must be tall, handsome, strong, magnificent, pompous, and sensual; must pretend to be religious; and otherwise must know how to dupe the people.[52] The interests of the state must at all times prevail over those of the individual. For De Meis democracy cannot exist until the people become thinkers.[35] In addition to Machiavellian realism De Meis reveals a definite contempt for the masses—a characteristic of his class who advocated the supremacy of the state in order to save their own status and property.

Except in matters of state authority, the influence of Machiavelli as a political scientist was not profound in the Risorgimento. There were Bismarcks outside Italy, but in the land of Machiavelli they still thought like "gentlemen" and fed on pure reason.

Among the leaders of the South only De Sanctis and a few others experienced strong influence of Italian political realism and endeavored to transmit it to newborn

Italy. "The scientific foundation of this world," says De Sanctis, "is effectual reality, as it is handed to us by experience and observation... This is Machiavellism, alive, still young. It is the program of the modern world, developed, corrected, amplified, and more or less realized. Great are those nations who follow it. Let us then be proud of our Machiavelli. Glory to him when a part of the old edifice crumbles. And glory to him when some part of the new one is built. As I write the bells announce the entrance of the Italians into Rome. The temporal power crumbles. Let us shout 'Long live the unity of Italy!' Glory be to Machiavelli!"[34]

NOTES

1. F. Fiorentino, *Lo stato moderno* (Roma: C. De Alberti, 1924), p. 57.
2. On Ricasoli see, Giovanni Spadolini, "Il plebiscito toscano del 1860," *Nuova Antologia,* 479 (May, 1960), 3-20.
3. F. Valsecchi, "Garibaldi and Cavour," *Nuova Antologia,* 479 (July 1960), 310.
4. Gabriele G. Pepe, "Introduction à l'histoire universelle par M. Michelet," *Antologia,* 128 (Aug. 1831), 65.
5. *Op. cit.*, p. 97.
6. Francesco De Sanctis, *Storia della letteratura italiana* (Milano, 1939), II, 56.
7. *Op. cit.*, pp. 56, 65, 76, 94-97.
8. *Op. cit.*, pp. 61, 79.
9. *Op. cit.*, pp. 61, 79.
10. *Op. cit.*, pp. 61, 78-79; *Scritti politici di F. De Sanctis,* a.c. di G. Ferrarelli (Napoli, 1924), pp. 156-157; *Scritti e discorsi politici,* a.c. di N. Cortese (Napoli, 1938, I, 99-103; *Saggi critici,* a.c. di N. Cortese (Napoli, 1930), II, 105-110.
11. Benedetto Croce, *Una famiglia di patriotti* (Bari, 1919), pp. 29-30, 38.
12. *Giornale Napoletano di filosofia e letteratura, scienza morale e politica,* VII (1878), 57-74.

13. Guido De Ruggiero, *Il pensiero politico meridionale* (Bari, 1922), pp. 278-279.
14. *Una famiglia di patriotti*, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-40.
15. Vittorio Imbriani, *Sette milioni rubati* (Bari, 1938), p. 50.
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26. Silvio Spaventa, *Discorsi parlamentari* (Roma, 1913), p. 423.
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Trends

Recent Accounts of Croce

What has become of Croce's philosophy today in Italy? For half a century Croce dominated the intellectual horizon of his country. Actually, there never was a school of Crocean philosophers in Italian universities during the lifetime of Croce; departments of philosophy were dominated by other schools of thought, and a man like Carlo Antoni was an isolated phenomenon. Croce's influence was instead particularly felt in historical studies, in literary and in art criticism—which is more or less as he would have liked it, having been always somewhat contemptuous of "professional philosophers."

But what has happened since Croce's death in 1952? There was at first the usual wave of inevitable revulsion which takes place after a long period of intellectual dominance. The extent of this reaction may be gauged by the humorous saying of a modern Italian critic, quoted by the lamented Leo Spitzer in his last MLA paper (1959): "We Italian critics, in the true Freudian manner, kill our father Croce every morning." The men who led the reaction against Croce were still, in one way or another, intellectual offspring of Croce. This becomes apparent when one compares some of the most vocal anti-Croceans in Italy with their opposite numbers in other countries. The Italians of today may balk at this or that critical judgment or concept of Croce, but when it comes to reviving the old methods of criticism, such as the genres approach or the didactic view or the magic powers of

abstract form, in which critics of other nations may put their faith, the Italians usually demur.

This happens in what may be called practicing criticism. In the purely philosophical field, there have been a number of critical discussions of Croce's ideas by younger scholars. Beginning with those who were closer to Croce, the works of the late Carlo Antoni, whose death occurred in August 1959, have made important contributions: see for instance his *Commento a Croce* (Venice, 1955) and his contribution to the symposium organized by the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Rome, *Verità e storia* (Asti, 1956). Shortly after his premature death a collection of his scattered writings appeared with the title *Gratitudine* (Napoli, 1959). Originally intended to be a *Festschrift*, it came out unhappily as a *Denkschrift*.

Raffaello Franchini, a younger friend of Croce who was close to him in his last years, published an excellent short biography of him, *Note biografiche di B. Croce* (Torino, RAI, 1953), which among other things tells for the first time in our day the story of Croce's youthful duel with a Neapolitan nobleman. A fuller account, by Giovanni Artieri, of this colorful episode, with much corroborative detail, appeared in the Roman newspaper *Il Messaggero* ("Briciole di biografia crociana — Un duello di Don Benedetto," January 30, 1955). Further quotations from Croce's diary concerning this incident of 1895 were given by Croce's lifetime friend and collaborator Fausto Nicolini in his monumental bibliography of Croce's works, *L'"editio ne varietur" delle opere di B. Croce* (Naples, 1960), pp. 464-65.

But this is anecdotage. More important for the study of Croce's thought are Franchini's philosophical studies, *Esperienza dello storicismo* (Naples, 1953), of which a new edition has just now appeared (Naples, 1960), *Metafisica e storia* (Naples, 1958) and *Il progresso; storia di un'idea* (Milan, 1960). The latter is a beautifully produced

little volume, artistically printed and bound. (In this connection it is curious to note that Italian publishers, who traditionally have always gone in for paperbacks, now go in heavily for bound books, just at the time that American publishers, who have always bound books, are going in heavily for paperbacks.) Franchini's latest volume, *Le origini della dialettica* (Naples, 1961), traces the history of the dialectical method in philosophy from its origins in Greek thought down to Croce's immediate predecessors. Its approach is both historical and theoretical: it gives an account of the idea while making a running commentary on its philosophical implications. Franchini's work should help to dispel the notion that Croce's influence should be merely repetitive: Franchini is obviously striking out for himself and following tracks that Croce either did not pursue or did not pursue far.

Another symptom of the continuing interest in Croce's thought is the fact that a book like Parente's *Concetto della storia* should reach a fourth edition in six years. This book, published in Bari in 1954 (4th ed. 1960), is a selection from Croce's discussions on the concept and method of history, tied together with a running commentary by Alfredo Parenté, a Croce student of long standing and author of several works on Croce's aesthetics. Recently he has published a valuable discussion of the concept of "vitality," upon which Croce laid much stress in his later years (see Parente's article in *Letterature moderne*, X, 1960, 10-19).

One of the difficulties of discussing Croce is the vast extent of his writings. Special techniques have to be adopted for a thorough analysis, involving a full exploration of his books and papers, and a special system of abbreviations. These techniques may be exemplified in the book by an American scholar, Roberto Caponigri, *History and Liberty, The Historical Writings of B. Croce* (Chicago, 1955), and by a very penetrating Italian book by Silvio Zeppi, *Studi crociani* (Trieste, 1956). Finally,

a special issue of the journal *Cultura e Società* (I, 3, April, 1960) edited in Bologna by Roberto Mazzetti, is dedicated to the intellectual legacy of Croce, with several interesting discussions. For these men Croce's legacy is still something of contemporary value.

GIAN N. G. ORSINI

Books

ELIOT'S *FOUR QUARTETS* TRANSPOSED

Among contemporary poets who write in English, though knowledge of them in Italy has grown since the war in unparalleled fashion thanks to excellent critics and translators, the figure of T. S. Eliot continues as in the past to be preeminent. Yet while the first Italian translations of Eliot date from as far back as 1926 (cf. Mario Praz in *La fiera letteraria*, 21 February 1926) and while, since 1941, the Italian reader has been able to acquaint himself with a large part of the *Collected Poems* in the selection of Luigi Berti, the Italian fortune of the *Four Quartets* has had a different fate, decidedly less prosperous. Though some scattered parts of Eliot's most mature work had been translated previously by L. Montano, E. Cecchi (from whom for more than ten years we have awaited in vain a complete version), M. Guidacci, A. Rizzardi, T. Giglio, R. La Capria, it has taken more than fifteen years since the publication of the *Four Quartets* for a complete and definitive translation into Italian to appear (T. S. Eliot, *Quattro Quartetti*, translation and notes by Filippo Donini, Garzanti, Milan, 1959).

I should say at once that the delay has not been in vain. As a translator myself I am aware of the choice that must constantly be faced (translation or version? and what is the effect of one without the aid of the other?), the need to sacrifice form in the interest of salvaging (particularly crucial with Eliot) the insistent intellectual content even at the risk of a division in the poetic unity, and the difficulty of reaching that equilibrium to which the language may not always lend itself.

For this reason I feel that Donini's labors have achieved, and with a text that encompasses both the subtlest and most luminous lyricism and also the most arduous, precise rationality, one of the most notable results in the whole field of Eliotic translation. In spite of the remarks Guidi has made (*Letteratura*, Sept-Dec. 1959) criticizing Donini for excessive

closeness to the text in the name of a poeticality that he would then resolve by keeping even more closely to the text, proposed with dubious taste solutions like "un viaggiatore di commercio" for "a conveyor of commerce" and "tamburo grottesco o buffo" for "antique drum," etc. — in spite of those strictures Donini has rendered the *Four Quartets* with philological exactitude that only very rarely runs the risk of frigidity and technical "faking," and with a feeling for the language of the original so assured that even in the most involved passages the reader is in a position to catch the most tenuous allusions. It may be objected that at times the fluidity of the text is lost or that the rimes, however infrequent, are not reproduced in the translation. But it is an old problem, much debated but never resolved, and, I would say, essentially insoluble. I have, then, no intention here of continuing the debate: what I wish to emphasize is that salvaging a rime (which in any case would be a different rime, given the different sound systems of languages) often means putting the reader in the position of not understanding the original meaning. An illustration that comes to mind is the following taken from a French translation of "Prufrock" (by Pierre Leyris, Editions du Seuil):

> Dans la pièce les femmes vont et viennent
> En parlant des maîtres de Sienne.

No elaborate commentary is needed to show that the allusion to Sienese painters in no way corresponds to the intention of the original text. The translations I prefer, Donini's among them, are always the least presumptuous: humble before the poet's original text, understanding his intentions and conveying them poetically as well as the linguistic medium or the skill of the translator allows. But within the limits of faithfulness, it should always be faithfulness to the spirit, not to the letter. Furthermore, in this translation (which is severely faithful) even the rhythms are often taken over—as for example in the second section of "Little Gidding," based partially on Dante's *terzina*—and some passages show how Donini has been able to render them with the same distancing. Particularly notable in this regard is the result he obtains in the first section of "East Coker," in the passage in which Eliot uses phrases from Sir Thomas Elyot's *Boke Named the Gouernour*:

> And see them dancing around the bonfire
> The association of man and woman

In daunsinge, signifying matrimonie —
A dignified and commodious sacrament.
Two and two, necessarye coniunction,
Holding eche other by the hand or the arm
Whiche betokeneth concorde.

Donini renders the passage:

E vederli danzare intorno al falò
L'associazione dell'uomo e della donna
In danza, quale de matrimonio est significatione...
Un sacramento pieno de degnità et convenientia.
A due per due, conjunctione necessaria,
Tenendosi l'uno et l'altro per la mano o il braccio
Che figura est de concordia.

This is only a single instance, but it is representative of the care taken by the translator and of his desire to achieve direct contact with the text and to preserve, with all humility, its values.

[Roberto Sanesi]

BUTTERFLY OF THE MEMORY

Under the poetic and mysterious title *Farfalla di Dinard* (Milano: Mondadori, 1960) the poet Eugenio Montale has collected the prose he had published in a Milanese newspaper between 1946 and 1950. The collection, which does not follow a chronological order but rather an affinity of themes and motifs, includes short short-stories, sketches, profiles, occasional pieces. The first part is dedicated to childhood and boyhood, both immersed in those Ligurian landscapes sung by another poet, Sbarbaro, in his *prosa d'arte*, or in an atmosphere that is to be found in some of Calvino's bold pages, or in the *milieu* of opera singers that is almost hidden to the public at large. The recalling of the past is not sterile and vain, it is an enrichment of the present achieved with a deep emotional force, always restrained (see "La casa delle due palme," "La regata," "La piuma di struzzo," "La donna barbuta").

The second part is a gallery of queer types that range

from a parasite to an unsuccessful artist ("I nemici del Signor Fuchs," "Dominico," and the ineffable "Signor Stapps"), up to the surrealistic club of laggards in "Slow."

In the third and fourth parts two sources of inspiration for Montale's art become more and more evident: the influence of little things and animals on man's life, and their survival in the memory. Both testify to the fragility of the human condition. Among the pieces inspired by the first motif are "Farfalla di Dinard," which gives the title to the collection, and "Volo dello sparviero," which has a stupendous beginning and a psychological development that recall Hemingway's "Cat Under the Rain." The second motif is found in the surrealistic flavor of "Il regista" and "Sul limite," in the ironic tone of "Le vedove" and "L'angoscia," in the pensiveness of "Sulla spiaggia" and "I quadri in cantina."

This is an incomplete and approximate classification of a subtle and complex poetic substance that cannot be ordered and exhaused within the boundaries of catagories. For instance, in "La piuma di struzzo" the underground vein that is really meaningful is not childhood but survival: "I slept very little, always repeating 'Del mondo i disinganni...' to myself and trying to disentangle the concealed meaning of that night visit... The two men were the beginning and the end of an arch, of a parabola that was mine, personal, private. Yet they continued to ignore the one for whom, objectively, they had existed most." Also, Montale's moral engagement is stated very explicitly in a passage from the second part that seems more superficial and brilliant than others: "The liberty of the single man, the liberty that is not everybody's, but of one *against everybody*—up to what point can it be of interest to us? I doubt that Dominico, by saving himself alone, will lose himself alone, and that he who does not realize the religious meaning of associated life does not realize either the best of individual life, of man himself, who is not a person unless he takes into account other persons, who is not fully a man unless he accepts other men."

Perhaps, an analysis of the relationship between *Farfalla di Dinard* and Montale's contemporary poetry will be more meaningful than a classification. Undoubtedly, many pages of *Farfalla di Dinard* help to explain both the genesis and the significance of part of *La bufera e altro*. For instance, "Sosta a Edimburgo" in the former book corresponds to "Vento sulla mezzaluna" in the latter; "Reliquie" corresponds to "Per albums;" "Il bello viene dopo" to "L'anguilla;" and so forth.

The relationship is, however, more intimate and allusive than simple correspondences. The two books constitute one poetic world expressed in two different moments. In the one language is less essential than in the other, but it does not lose the fineness and precision of "barely engraved etching."

The poetic tone of Montale's prose derives from the varied combination of irony, elegy, and humor. It distinguishes him from other authors, similar in themes and "situations" but different in basic inspiration: may I recall, for instance, the delicacy of certain pages by Katherine Mansfield, like "The Fly" and "The Tea Cup." Particularly beautiful results derive from the casting of a subtly bitter irony and an intimately pensive elegiac tone, as when Montale echoes the Foscolian "corrispondenza d'amorosi sensi" between the dead and the living, the theme of survival in the memory. By undramatizing it he brings it nearer to us, within our reach, without giving up, however, his aristocratic reserve. Let me quote the words he says to an imaginary (perhaps) and fatuous interviewer: " 'always thought I preferred cats to dogs,' I said afterwards, excusing myself because I began replying to the simplest questions. 'Later on, the hysterical passion of some ladies for tribes of cats around them made me turn with interest towards dogs. My conversion is recent, it is due to the fact that dogs, more than cats, remain in the memory, ask to survive within us. Theoretically I am against survival and believe it would be highly decorous if men and beasts accepted to *sombrer* into the eternal Nothing. But practically—by inheritance—I am a Christian and cannot escape from the idea that something of us can or even must last. Galiffa, the dog whose snapshot I can show you, my dear colleague, died more than forty years ago. In this snapshot, which is the only one existing now, Galiffa appears next to a friend of mine who is dead too. I am, then, the only person that still keeps the memory of that playful reddish-haired mongrel that loved me. When it was too late I loved him too."

The theme of survival, variously modulating and vibrating, actually pervades the greater part of *Farfalla di Dinard*. It is the theme through which Montale recreates, for himself and the reader, a world of his own, made of very different *milieux*, unexpected characters, fanciful names (Buck, Pallino, Passepoil, Pippo, Bubù... Lapo, Esmeralda, Mascotto, Pinco, Tartufo, Margot...), odd encounters, dreams, secret moments. It is the theme that develops along the magical thin thread of the flight of an unforeseeable, fragile butterfly of the memory,

ephemeral as a vision: "I bent my head and when I raised it again I saw, on the vase of dahlias, that the butterfly was no longer there."

[G.P.B.]

HORACE OR ARISTOTLE?

Poets should instruct, or please, or both, said Horace in his *Ars Poetica*, and the echo of this, the best-known verse of his famous work on literary criticism resounded through the centuries in the ears of poets and critics alike. Horace's voice was the clearest and the most familiar in Italy, but, at different intervals, it was accompanied and at times subdued by the hallowed voices of Plato and Aristotle. Although this is an oversimplification, it is to the tradition of Horace's *Ars Poetica*, of Platonism, and of Aristotle's *Poetics* that Professor Bernard Weinberg devotes approximately two thirds of his recently published, monumental *History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance* (The University of Chicago Press, 1961, 2 vols.).

There has been no dearth of histories of literary criticism of the Italian Renaissance, but no overabundance either: the best known, until now, have been two, one in English, *History of Literary Criticism in the Renaissance* by J. E. Spingarn, which was first published in 1899, and the other in Italian, *La critica letteraria* (*Dai primordi dell'umanesimo all'età nostra*) published by Ciro Trabalza in 1915. Of the two, the one most often consulted because of its clarity, brevity and manageability, is the former, which has been translated into various languages.

While reading and after reading the work by Weinberg it is practically impossible to resist the impulse to compare it, in a general way, with the oldish, but still excellent, work by Spingarn, even if the two works are quite different in approach and in scope. Spingarn, the reader will recall, devotes the first half of his treatise to the unfolding of literary criticism in Italy, and the second half to the development, under Italian influence, of literary criticism in France and in England. His goal was to point up the role played by Italy in the origin of the neoclassic spirit and in the formulation of the neoclassic principles; and, at the same time, to bring into focus the debt of the modern world towards Italy in the field of literary

criticism. A debt, he believed, which was as great in that field as in the other fields which reached maturity in Renaissance Italy: literature, painting, sculpture, architecture, etc. Weinberg, as the title suggests, dedicates his whole effort to explaining the spectrum of literary criticism in Renaissance Italy and to how it came about.

In his treatment Spingarn, who made use of a much smaller number of texts, tends to summarize the texts rather than to analyze them as Weinberg does constantly and painstakingly, in trying to discover their structure and compose their history. Further, after Spingarn has prepared the background, he limits himself to examining singly the theories of the literary genres most often discussed at the time: tragedy, comedy, and epic poetry. This definitely has certain advantages for the acquisition of a general perspective, but one has the impression, at the same time, that Spingarn was highly eclectic and held fairly close to the big guns of Italian literary criticism: Robertelli, Cinzio, Varchi, Minturno, Castelvetro, Patrizi, and others.

Weinberg, as we learn in the Preface, tried "to distinguish the main intellectual traditions of the century as they related to literary criticism and to trace them year by year and text by text, up through the sixteenth century." "What I have attempted," he writes, "is an experiment in the writing of intellectual history." Weinberg's scope, then, is greater than Spingarn's, both in breadth and in depth. The course is clearly set and the author ploughs deeply into the fertile ground which is enriched by layers of truly virgin soil: this because in following the *fortuna* of Platonism, of Aristotle's *Poetics*, and of Horace's *Ars Poetica* through the years, and in analyzing their acceptance, rejection, or more often, transformation at the hand of the Italian critics, Weinberg has utilized a much larger bibliography than was available over half a century ago to Spingarn—or, for that matter, to Trabalza—and he has examined and availed himself of much manuscript material which had been left untouched by the scholars who preceded him. His canvas, then, is not only a vaster one, but is enriched by new colors and tones.

After he has patiently traced the growth of the three major critical traditions and discussed in their light the new "arts of poetry" that proliferated all over Italy during the sixteenth century, Professor Weinberg examines the application of these three theories to certain works. Thus, the second part of his opus, entitled "Practical Criticism," is a treatment

of the main literary quarrels of the *Cinquecento*: the quarrel which was fought over Dante's *Divine Comedy* (was Dante as great as Homer? was his poem really a great heroic poem, or a heroic poem at all, since it violated, some felt, all Aristotelian rules?); the violent quarrel over the incestuous tragedy *Canace* by the critic Sperone Speroni who, like some other critics of the time, felt duty-bound to try his hand at the hallowed classical genre; the unfortunate and bitter quarrel over the linguistic and structural merits of the two great narrative poems of the century, Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* and Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*; and the less-known quarrel over G. B. Guarini's voluptuous *Il Pastor Fido* with which he created a new genre, tragicomedy. These quarrels, which were only incidentally mentioned by Spingarn, are a significant part of Weinberg's work, for not only do they clearly show how the critics put to direct use the theories they had painfully been evolving, but, incidentally, they portray the atmosphere in which many of the literary works of the second half of the *Cinquecento* were written.

Contrary to Spingarn's treatise, in which direct quotations from the texts are not very common, Weinberg's work is documented with countless quotations. In order to make his book more readily accessible, the author has translated all the quoted passages from Italian and Latin into English: the originals are, however, given at the bottom of the page.

The lengthy bibliography lists all the works consulted by the author, both original documents and secondary sources.

Weinberg's two large volumes are beautifully and carefully edited. There is no doubt that they represent a most impressive and important contribution to the field of Renaissance criticism.

[C.S.]

A VERGA BIBLIOGAPHY

Gino Raya is best known to most of us through his *Il Romanzo* (Milano, 1950), characterized by its vigorous and stimulating independence of critical opinion. His interest in Verga dates back to 1927 (he was barely 21 at the time) when he published in the *Giornale dell'Isola* an article entitled "Giovanni Verga nella critica di A. Momigliano." Then or soon thereafter he must have begun to collect Verghiana until in 1959 his materials had become sufficiently abundant to be

complemented from other sources and published in the form of a comprehensive bibliography: *Un secolo di bibliografia verghiana* (Pubblicazioni dell'Istituto Universitario di Magistero di Catania, Padova, CEDAM, 1960).

Verga's numerous letters are conveniently arranged as of the dates when they were written rather than as of the dates when printed. Other items, including two in 1960, are arranged according to the year and date of publication. Generous quotations are drawn from the letters, while the bulk of the more out-of-the-way items are briefly analyzed. As one goes through these and scans the uncommented titles, enough of the apparently disconnected fragments fit into their places like pieces of a jig-saw puzzle, resulting in a picture as intimate and as varied as that of a full-fledged bio-critical presentation. We are further struck by the fact that so much on Verga has come out in the *terze pagine* of newspapers, an indication that the appeal of the man and his works has found a warm reception in the hearts of people of all classes and professions. Publicity of this sort is the most genuine test of a man's popularity.

Professor Raya has done a superb job in bringing together a vast array of widely scattered bibliographical information. For the omissions that inevitably occur he invites his readers in the conclusion of his preface to "collaborare alla revisione dell'opera." We are glad to be able to respond to this invitation with the small addendum which follows: Barzilai, S. "Giovanni Verga e Gerolamo Rovetta." *Palcoscenico e platea* (Milano, 1940, 82-100); Berardi, G. "Mito dei primitivi e coerenza storica in *Tigre Reale*." *Studi letterari per il 250 anniversario della nascita di C. Goldoni* (Pavia, 1957, 340-83); Bevilotti, G. *Giovanni Verga: appunti critici* (Palermo, 1900); Ferri, E. "I delinquenti di sangue nella tragedia e nel dramma." *I delinquenti nell'arte ed altre conferenze e saggi di scienza ed arte* (2ª ed. Torino, 1926, 4-55); Gabba, C. F. *Intorno ai diritti dell'autore del libretto di un'opera di canto: a proposito della controversia Verga-Sonzogno-Mascagni* (Milano, 1891); Greco, M. M. "De Amicis, Capuana, Verga." *Dall'arte: memorie ed impressioni sulla letteratura italiana contemporanea* (Vol. I, Roma, 1902, 69-71); Hempel, W. *Giovanni Vergas Roman*: I Malavoglia *und die Widerholung als erzählerisches Kunstmittel* (Köln-Graz, 1959); Lombardi, O. "Polemica del linguaggio in Giovanni Verga." *Escritores de Italia desde Galileo hasta nuestros días* (Buenos Aires, 1944, 187-96); Marvasi, R. "Qua si parla della poesia di Napoli, di Salvatore Di Gia-

como e un po' di Giovanni Verga." *Amanti e poeti* (Roma, n.d., 69-90); Rovetta, G. "Giovanni Verga." *Cinque minuti di riposo* (Milano, 1912, 53-60); Simoni, R. " La lupa." *Trent'anni di cronaca drammatica* (Vol. I, Torino, 1951, 471-73); Stella, M. "Verga e il regionalismo meridionale." *I nostri romanzi* (Roma, 1927, 25-27); Villani, C. "L'arte della prosa: Verga." *Critica e arte* (Città di Castello, 1911, 50-53); Weidlich, C. "Verga." *Nel mondo degli scrittori* (Palermo, 1931, 130-32). Add to these a translation of *Cavalleria rusticana* in Catalan by C. Costa and J. M. Jordá (Barcelona, 1908) and two Spanish translations of *Eva*, one by P. Pedraza y Páez (Barcelona, 1922) and the other by Cansinos-Assens (Madrid, 1923).

Since it happens to coincide with a considerable revival of interest in Verga this bibliography is both timely and welcome.

[Joseph G. Fucilla]

A VITELLONE MORTALLY WOUNDED

Those who saw Fellini's film *I vitelloni* will recall that it portrays the sentimental " grandeur and decadence " of certain provincial young men, from which finally one of them escapes by leaving town. A similar portrait is now to be found in *Ferito a morte* by Raffaele La Capria (Milan: Bompiani, 1961), winner of the Strega Prize for 1961.

The young protagonist Massimo De Luca is to leave Naples one summer morning in the year 1954, and while half asleep in bed he perceives the voices around him in the house, the noises outside, the echoes of past memories. Because of the concentration on these echoes there is hardly any plot in the novel: facts, faces, episodes are but scattered images flashing in the hearts of Massimo, of his brother Ninì, of his friend Gaetano (reminiscent of Pavese's Communist companion). Through these images the reader can draw together the threads of the story of Massimo's love — from the first encounter with Carla Boursier during an air raid in 1943 to the failure of New Year's Eve 1949 — and of his slowly formulated decision to leave Naples for the North and for a grey bureaucratic job that will deprive him of the magic of his brief happy youth and of a city that either " wounds you to death or puts you to sleep. " Through these images the

reader forms a picture of a certain Neapolitan society soon after the war — the traditional and narrow-minded De Luca family and the servant Assuntina, the idle and provincial bourgeoisie of the " Circolo Nautico," the brilliant beach parasites like Sasà who gives vivacity to the boredom of fat lawyers and fatuous starlets spending their seemingly endless vacations at Capri and along the beautiful Neapolitan coast. Through these images, finally, the reader is immersed in a submarine world not only of memories but also of fish hunting, which is the visible *leitmotiv* of the novel. The last three chapters are in complete juxtaposition to the preceding seven. Massimo gives a detailed chronicle of his returns to Naples in search of a lost time and of a lost happiness. The very dryness and seeming detachment of the narrative add intensity to the torment and melancholy that crept between an image and an invention before, casting a shadow of sadness over the entire book and helping us to understand the desperate failure, both emotional and ideological, of Massimo.

As one might expect, then, the style for three quarters of the book is based on inner monologue, a technique so far not often used in Italian, given the rigidity of the language, but quite common in French and English, where Proust and Joyce excelled. As a matter of fact, La Capria even shares the latter's taste for puns, which in Italian literary tradition are notoriously looked down upon, to say the least. At any rate, La Capria uses inner monologue with great ability and sensitivity, narrating his story on various temporal levels and from various points of view. Montale wonders if such a technique is not "uselessly fatiguing." It may be so as far as the first chapter is concerned (a sort of overture containing the themes of the symphony); but certainly it is not true for the best pages of the book. As La Capria himself pointed out in an interview, through the inner monologue he was able to avoid the dangers of the autobiographical and of the picturesque, and to achieve the representation of what he calls " the anguishing immobility of time in Naples. " Undoubtedly, La Capria's vein is mainly lyrical, but he is careful not to fall into too deep a participation, too personal an involvement, too touching a recollection, through the witty and ironic description of certain settings (for instance, the chapter on the " Circolo Nautico ") and through a sharp concern for detail (for instance, the image of a fish just speared by Massimo: "The weight of the spear dragged it to the bottom, onto a smooth white rock, and the

blood issued upward from the wound like a thread of pinkish smoke in the water ").

The introspective, subjective, elusive approach of La Capria is quite the opposite of Moravia's objectivism and the social and realistic approach of other southern writers (e.g. Rea, Prisco). From this point of view, the Neapolitan-born La Capria adds a personal contribution to contemporary Italian literature. He successfully links the inner world with social reality, without sacrificing, and even enhancing, his lyrical vein.

[G.P.B.]

STREGA PRIZE 96 TO 95

The tortuous manner by which the annual winner of the Strega Prize is chosen has become proverbial in Italian literary circles (see Italian Quarterly, IV, 16, " Italian Literary Prizes "). But never as in 1960 was its large jury so hard pressed in making a selection. The first prize went to Raffaele La Capria for his *Ferito a morte* with 96 votes; the two runners up, both with 95 votes were Giovanni Arpino's *Un delitto d'onore*, and Fausta Cialente's *Ballata levantina*. The aficionados of the prize proclaim that never before in the fifteen years of life of the award was there such an atmosphere of keen competition and charged expectation as at the last literary-mundane evening at the Ninfeo of Valle Giulia in Rome. Socially, as well, the evening seems to have set some sort of a record as the most brilliant soirée in the history of the much coveted award. As for the books, the situation was much the same as in other years, meaning that with the exception of the winners and their sponsors, few were pleased, and the criticisms have been as numerous and violent as in the past. *Ferito a morte* of La Capria is reviewed separately in this section of the I.Q.; there remain to be considered the two runners up.

Un delitto d'onore, Arpino's fourth novel, has decidedly added to the stature of this writer. According to the date that appears at the end of the volume the book was written in a very short time, from October to December 1960, but the writing must have been preceded by a long and painstaking process of documentation as the author implies in a final note of thanks to those who aided him in this task. Apparently the novel is based on actual events that took place in the early

days of fascism in the region of Irpinia, and the macabre story is still remembered in those parts. Briefly it deals with a member of the local petty nobility who married a girl from the lower classes with the intention of recreating, in his own distorted way, the legend of Pygmalion. But the story of this fair lady turns into tragedy for on the wedding night Doctor Castiglia discovers that his bride is not " pure and untouched ". After her many denials he finally extorts from her the confession that she had been forced to submit by a local Don Juan who had since left town to serve in the army at the other end of Italy.

Once he has ascertained the facts the doctor immediately decides on a course of action; if there is any hesitancy in him this is dictated by strategic consideration and not by any problem of logistics. In fact, he undertakes what he considers his sacred duty with the unquestionable devotion of a dedicated soldier and with the maniacal furor of the obsessed. His unrelenting and agonizing anguish stems from this very obsession, from his fear that he may fail in his unescapable duty. The point is that his " duty ", which he performs with meticulous precision, consists of skilfully cutting his wife's throat while she is asleep, and then, not being able to find the perpetrator of his wife's downfall, he turns his vengeance against the seducer's sister, the willing accomplice in the sordid deed, and shoots her in cold blood. Once his mission is accomplished a sense of peace finally descends upon him. As he sits in the police station where, spurred by the same fanatical sense of honor that moved him to murder, he has come to give himself up, the feverish agitation that has driven him during the last days finally subsides.

It is then a *delitto d'onore*, at least in the distorted view of honor as it exists in Doctor Castiglia's mind, but shared, it seems, to a great extent by the society in which he lives. Whether this inhuman concept of honor is still prevalent or not, whether it is or not morally justifiable are questions which do not enter into the formulation of an appraisal of the novel. The author offers no direct comment, utters no explicit judgement and goes to great lengths in remaining completely objective, hence the necessity of his documentation prepared with such care. The greatest merit of the book is in the very fact that the aberration of the Doctor's mind finds its justification, its raison d'être, in its own distorted logic and not in the author's injured moral sense. The technique has no points of contact with the stream of consciousness novels, it

does not contain pseudo-clinical observations, it does not delve, à la Moravia, into the psychological evolution of the character. The absurdly cruel denouement is suggested and implicit in the protagonist's every action. Hence the occasional insistence on certain lurid and seamy details which reveal the doctor's viciously petty moral inadequacy and portray his victim's impossible escape from circumstances, thus setting the moral tone of the milieu in which they move.

The book could well have stopped with the doctor's violent self deliverance from his injured pride. But the author, undoubtedly with satirical intent, introduces after the murder a glimpse of things to come in the third and final part. A famous criminal lawyer has been persuaded to undertake the defense of the doctor. The pressure is exerted chiefly by that very social class of which the doctor is part and parcel, and the implied possibility of the eventual acquittal of the doctor (and the not improbable election to mayor) rests on the decision to present him as the defender of the morals of the community. The machine through which this insidious propaganda is to be exploited finds its lubricant in the incipient fascist organizations. A tacit but clear indication of the type of soil in which fascist mores and morality will eventually bear fruit. One should add that the book is greatly enhanced by the author's keen handling of the psychological elements and by the numerous descriptive passages of the local panoramas intimately felt and depicted with masterly style.

Ballata levantina is the second novel of Fausta Cialente. Her earlier novel *Cortile e Cleopatra*, appeared about twenty years ago. Even after such a long lapse the author returns to her earlier themes and locale. The background is still Egypt and its international colony from about 1900 to the eve of the second World War. The beginning of the story is dominated by the figure of the protagonist's grandmother, a "high-class" courtesan, in whose house she grew up. Around this personage, half-loved, half-despised, Daniela reconstructs the world of her early years and of her adolescence. On a lower plane, against the background of the imminent international catastrophe, and divided into those poisoned by fascism and those who tenaciously hold on to a saner view of life, move innumerable characters. Among these Matteo and Livia particularly, seem to counterbalance the ambiguous morality of the grandmother and the slithering advance of political evil. After the first part, and with a sudden and unexplained change of technique, carried off remarkably well by the author, the story is no

longer recounted directly by Daniela but by a third person. We follow Daniela through the painful process of growing up punctuated by her first love for Gilbert. His tragic death, forebodings of which were already sensed by Daniela in a persistent dream, becomes a lifelong incubus surrounded by unexplained elements of the supernatural and which is finally resolved by her own tragic death in similar circumstances. The note of mystery on which the book ends (one is never certain whether Daniela deliberately ended her life of was the victim of an accident) seems to justify amply the author's choice of the title. The word "ballad" suggests the recurring theme, and easily embodies the series of events lightly tinged by mystery and supernatural and which unfold in the framework of world wide events that seem only to reverberate in the distance but are actually the determining points in the life of the protagonists. The puzzling end, the exotic milieu skilfully exploited by the author, the opulence of descriptive passages and the "traditional" technique of characterization render the book unique in present-day Italian literature. The very length of the volume, about 400 pages, is also unusual for a modern Italian novel. Nevertheless the author never lets them weigh heavily on the reader. The pace of the narrative never lags, and if the tragic sense of life is never, even for a moment, absent, it is because such is the author's own view of it.

[C.L.G.]

IMAGE OF ITALY

The *Texas Quarterly* has devoted the Summer number of this year to Italy. Although the issue is dedicated to the men of the Texas Division who fell during the crossing of the Rapido river under Monte Cassino in 1944, and no mention is made that 1961 marks the first centennial of Italian Unity, some readers will wonder whether after all this special issue of the *Texas Quarterly* was not prompted by the various tributes paid to Italy this year.

In the Forword, by William Arrowsmith who planned the whole number, the reader is told, rightly, that "as images of nations go, Italy's is surely among the world's most unmanageable." Further, that "this issue deliberately makes no attempt to describe or document the culture of contemporary Italy." This, because Italian painting, music, literature, etc., have received already a great deal of attention in recent years.

Briefly, the chief goal of this issue, Mr. Arrowsmith says, "has been to suggest how the ideas of Italy and of being Italian are made, and how they shape, and are shaped by, the work of Italian writers and thinkers in turn. Necessarily this also meant suggesting the very texture of Italian life, itself, providing images of sufficient depth and diversity and reality that they could support the burden of ideas imposed upon them and also vouch for their own validity.... Generally speaking, I have tried to let Italians speak for themselves along a broad spectrum of convictions, backgrounds and problems.... to this general rule there are two exceptions: the piece on postwar politics by Osbert Hastings and Igor Markevitch's lead-article *Homage to Italy*. In the first case, detachment and distance seemed essential, and these were things that no Italian could be expected to provide; in the second, it seemed to me important that Italian ideas of Italy should be confronted, for the sake of contrast, with the mature perceptions of a foreign mind... Apart from the section called *Montage* — which is a calculated jumble of juxtaposed contrasts in landscape and image — almost everything in this issue is directly concerned with the simple realities of being Italian and the modern look of Italy."

Aside from the mentioned *Homage to Italy*, which opens the "Image," an article by Giorgio Borsa on *Postwar Italian Economy*, and the one by Osbert Hastings on *Italian Postwar Politics*, the "Image" consists of: an essay by Elena Croce *On Being Italian*, which really sets the theme; a *Report on Palma di Montechiaro* by Sandro Osmani; a selection of letters of the lovelorn, "Confessions of Italian Women;" the *Letter to Don Piero* by Lorenzo Milani, with a commending note by Ignazio Silone; and numerous "literary" pieces by such well-known writers as Corrado Alvaro, Cesare Pavese, Vincenzo Cardarelli, Carlo Levi, Mario Soldati, and a few others.

The leading article by Igor Markevitch is a warm and sincere homage to Italy: it is a sympathetic, penetrating inquiry into the life, the customs and the feelings of Italians, and it reflects the many years of direct contact the author — a distinguished musician — had with Italians, mainly Tuscans, during and after the war. Mr. Markevitch makes an effort to explain what makes Italians what they are, and what made them put up with the Fascist experiment. What he says is largely true, but, I should say, mainly of the lower classes. Some of the statements are too general to be correct: for instance, that the streets of Italian cities were designed narrow

in order to keep houses cool; that Italian cuisine is almost archaic in its simplicity; that Italian women are bored by flirtation, and that after a few years of marriage they take a lover and generally remain faithful to him!

The essay of Elena Croce is a penetrating inquest on what being Italian means today, in the postwar world in which mass culture is overcoming, in many places, the old bourgeois society. Miss Croce feels that foreigners have really not known Italy: they have known Italy's monuments and antiquities, but not her complex, individualistic people. Antiquity, instead of being an asset, has weighed heavily on Italy. But things have changed since the war, and Italians have lost the old concept of inadequacy in a modern world. "To be Italian today, means to have an awareness of identity which is no longer troubled by the feeling of inadequacy or the knowledge that one belongs to a hopelessly ancient country. Nor is it troubled by the recognition that Italy is what she is, a country composed exclusively of individuals and minorities, almost totally lacking in any instinctive or constructive social tradition. On the contrary, these things seem today the marks of a privileged situation. In a mass civilization, in a world where modernity no longer seems an achievement to be proud of but a simple mechanical fact, what more valuable resource could a nation have than the conviction of antiquity and deep individualty?"

The *Report on Palma di Montechiaro* is along the lines of similar works by Danilo Dolci, and Gavin Maxwell's *The Ten Pains of Death.* It is a shocking portrayal of life in one of the most backward and poverty-ridden towns in western Sicily. Its purpose, of course, was to bring forcefully to the attention of the Italian government such primitive and unsanitary conditions, with the plea that something concrete be done to remove them.

The few letters of lovelorn women published under the heading *Confessions of Italian Women* were taken from a well-known survey of the problems of Italian women by Gabriella Parca. They are, in a way, typical of such letters in the four corners of the globe, but they are interesting because they highlight the amatory mores among certain Italian classes, mainly the lower classes, of certain section of Italy, mainly the southern.

The *Letter to Don Piero* is a powerful indictment of slave-like working conditions at the spinning mills of Prato, near Florence. It is an outspoken analysis of the wretched plight of the workers, many of them children, and a plea for better-

ment. At the same time, this piece, by an outspoken priest, evidences and discusses a crisis of conscience in Italian Catholicism.

The perspective of Italian Economy and Politics are well documented and informative.

The items taken from the "literary" production of some of the contemporary Italian writers are all interesting and well chosen. They have been made a part of the issue under review because undoubtedly they illustrate several facets of Italian life and customs, and even landscape. Especially appropriate, I believe, are: *Bread* by Carlo Levi, in which the author, who has tasted the wonderful bread baked in wood-burning ovens, bemoans the contemplated law enforcing that bread be baked in electric ovens; Soldati's *A Dinner in Rome*, which evokes little-known Rome in the summer, and the preparation and degustation of an old Roman specialty, the *pagliata*; Alvaro's *Roman Spring*; Cardarelli's *Corneto Tarquinia*, which captures the life of a typical small Italian town with its customs and festivals; and Carlo Cassola's *The Cutting of the Trees*, a poignant, poetic description of the hard life of Tuscan charcoal makers. Of little import, in the present context, seems the inclusion of some of the others, particularly of Mario Tobino's *Oscar Pilli*, the lunatic officer during the Italian war in Africa, Pavese's *Dialogues with Leucò*, and even Vitaliano Brancati's *Paolo and Giovanna*, for the sexual exploits of a precocious teenager with the housemaid are hardly typical of any country.

At the half-point mark of *Image of Italy* is a lengthy poem by Paolo Volponi, *The Apennine Year*. This poem, which was awarded the Viareggio Prize in 1960, is very appropriate: in the tradition of a thirteenth century poem by Folgòre da San Gimignano, it describes the countryside and the various activities of farmers during the twelve months of the year in central Italy.

The volume is enriched by a profusion of photographs, taken by Russell Lee, which are meant to form an integral part of the text. It is truly excellent photo reportage. Since the purpose of the whole volume is to portray life in Italy, one would seek in vain among the photographs the usual views of wellknown places and monuments. The illustrations are grouped in clusters, and each cluster is intended to illustrate a certain aspect of Italian life and landscape.

There is no question that this special issue of the *Texas Quarterly* has been carefully planned and executed. It is the present reviewer's feeling, however, that both the text and

the illustrations are somehow slanted to highlight "poor," "humble," "backward" Italy. In spite of the justification one finds in the Forword, it seems to me that this image of Italy, true though it be, is almost as one-sided as the romantic Italy of tourists. Since the true Image of Italy is so complex, and many-faceted, why not try to capture a few of the other facets? Many Italians, I am sure, especially those who lead an urban existence, would fail to find their own image in this volume. As times, rather than getting an idea of the "modern look of Italy," as the reader is promised in the Forword, I wonder whether he is not given the crystallized "old look," which is hardly different today from what it used to be hundreds of years ago.

[C.S.]

QUITE A NUMBER of books of Italian interest have been announced for publication this fall in England. Among them are: the first volume of the new large-scale *Cambridge Italian Dictionary* and lectures on *The Italian Renaissance* by Denys Hay (both Cambridge University Press); *The Last Bourbons of Naples* by Harold Acton, a continuation of his earlier book on the same dynasty (Methuen); Alberto Moravia's *The Empty Canvas,* a translation of *La noia* (Heinemann); an historical and contemporary account of *Naples: a Palimpsest* by Peter Gunn (Chapman and Hall); a two-volume treatise on *The Architecture of Michelangelo* by James Ackerman (Zwemmer); reproductions of *Botticelli* with an introduction by the late Lionello Venturi (Phaidon); *Art Treasures of the Medici,* edited by Filippo Rossi, *Italian Modern Sculpture,* edited by Roberto Salvini, and the first volumes of a *Complete Library of World Art* devoted to Leonardo, Masaccio and Piero della Francesca (all published by Oldbourne).

Perhaps most remarkable is the new Oxford Library of Italian Classics (Oxford University Press), inaugurated and edited by Archibald Colquhoun, the well-known translator and biographer of Manzoni. The first five volumes are: a translation in *terza rima* of the *Inferno* by Warwick Chipman; *Machiavelli: the Literary Works,* translated and introduced by J. R. Hale; *Italian Regional Tales of the 19th Century,* edited by Mr. Colquhoun and Neville Rogers; *Goldoni: Three Comedies,* translated by various hands; and *Alfieri: Memoirs,* edited by E. R. Vincent.

A MANTEGNA Exhibit opened early in September in Mantua. It is one of the best exhibits of this painter ever assembled. Masterpieces of the Paduan master were collected from all over the world.

AT THE "SAGRA Musicale Umbra" in Assisi a great success was scored by the opening work, "Le Mystère de Jeanne D'Arc", starring Arnoldo Foà and Emmanuelle Riva under the direction of Henri Soubeyran of the

French Television. The original text was revised by René Clermont and translated into Italian by Eugenio Montale; the music was revised by Marcel Couraud, a disciple of Stravinsky, and performed by the Orchestra of the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino.

VENICE FILM FESTIVAL: "Il leone d'oro" to "L'année derniere à Marienbad" by Alain Resnais; Suzanne Flon best actress and Toshiro Mifune best actor (for "You shall not kill" by Autant-Lara and "La guardia del corpo" by Kurosawa, respectively).

LUIGI RUSSO, the famous literary critic, died last August from a heart attack. He was 69. Editor of the literary review *Belfagor,* Russo had been professor of Italian literature at the University of Pisa since 1934.

PLANS FOR 3500 kilometers of "autostrade" and 1500 kilometers of "superstrade" have received approval by the Italian Senate and Chamber of Deputies. Completion date: 1971.

AT THE BERLIN Film Festival *La Notte* was awarded the Golden Bear for the best feature film. It was directed by Michelangelo Antonioni and starred Marcel Mastroianni, Jeanne Moreau and Bernhard Wicki.

LA CULTURA filosofica del Rinascimento italiano (The Cultural Philosophy of the Italian Renaissance) by Eugenio Garin (Florence: Sansoni, 1961) has just been published. The volume is a collection of various works published by the author within the last twelve years, with additional notes and explanation.

AMONG THE MORE significant books of Italian interest to be published recently in this country are the following: Elio Vittorini, *The Dark and the Light,* a translation of both *Erica* and *La Garibaldina* (New Directions: Norfolk, Connecticut); Ignazio Silone, *The Fox and the Camellias,* known in Italian as *La volpe e le camelie* (Harper's: New York); Mario Soldati, *The Real Silvestri,* that is, *Il vero Silvestri* (Knopf: New York); Alberto Denti di Pirajno, *Ippolita,* in an English version by the author (Doubleday: Garden City); Leonardo Olschki, *Marco Polo's Asia* (University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles); A. William Salomone, *Italy in the Giolittian Era,* a reissue (University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia); Richard A. Webster, *The Cross and*

the Fasces: Christian Democracy and Fascism in Italy (Stanford UP: Stanford, California); Fredrick G. Friedmann, *The Hoe and the Book: An Italian Experiment in Community Development* (Cornell UP: Ithaca); Charles F. Delzell, *Mussolini's Enemies: The Italian Anti-Fascist Resistance* (Princeton UP: Princeton, New Jersey); Maurice F. Neufeld, *Italy: School for Awakening Countries,* concerning the Italian labor movement from 1800 to 1960 (Cornell University: Ithaca); Jean Charnley, *An American Social Worker in Italy* (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis); Ferdinand Schevill, *History of Florence From the Founding of the City through the Renaissance* (Ungar: New York); J. Lucas-Dubreton, *Daily Life in Florence in the Time of the Medici,* translated from the French (Macmillan: New York); Donald Weinstein, ed., *Ambassador from Venice: Pietro Pasqualigo in Lisbon, 1501* (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis); J. A. Mazzeo, *Medieval Cultural Tradition in Dante's Comedy* (Cornell UP: Ithaca); Irma Brandeis, *The Ladder of Vision: A Study of Dante's Comedy* (Doubleday: Garden City); Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince,* newly translated and introducted by George Bull (Penguin Books: Baltimore); *The Letters of Machiavelli,* edited and translated by Allan Gilbert in a selected edition (Capricorn Books: New York); Vittorio Alfieri, *Of Tyranny,* edited by J. A. Molinaro and Beatrice Corrigan (University of Toronto Press: Toronto); *Marino Marini: Graphic Work and Paintings,* introduced by P. M. Bardi (Abrams: New Fork); Arthur Pope, *Titian's Rape of Europa: A Study of the Composition and the Mode of Representation in This and Related Paintings* (Harvard UP: Cambridge); *Gibbon's Journey from Geneva to Rome,* an edition by Georges A. Bonnard of Edward Gibbon's journal for the summer of 1764; Jean-François Revel, *As for Italy* (Dial: New York).

THE FESTIVAL of the Two Worlds at Spoleto which ended on July 17 with a gala performance of "Salome" included: 122 operas, ballets, musicals, dramas, concerts, and plays; the exhibit of modern American drawings under the auspices of the Museum of Modern Art, New York; and the exhibit of the Greek scenographer Theophane Meteculos, under the auspices of the Greek Embassy in Rome.

VIRGILIO BROCCHI died on April 7 at the age of 85.

He was probably the last novelist under the influence of Fogazzaro and other late Romanticists and had published more than 50 books, from *Le Aquile*, through *Mitî* (his first great success), to the long cycles *Libri azzurri*, *I romanzi della Isola Sonante*, *Ciclo del Figliuol d'uomo*, *I casti libri delle donne che hanno amato*. On the same day another well known writer, Giani Stuparich, died. He was 70. He belonged to the group of writers from Trieste who contributed so much to Italian literature (Svevo, Cantoni, Michelstaedter, Slataper). His first and fundamental experience was World War One (see the diary *Guerra del '15* and the novel *Ritorneranno*), but his best short stories portray the vigorous, at times rough, bourgeois youth of his city ("Un anno di scuola"), and family relations ("Il ritorno del padre"), which are seen with precision and love.

POLIZIANO'S second hundreds ("centuria") of *Miscellanea* were discovered after four and a half centuries by Vittore Branca, professor at the University of Padua, secretary of the Giorgio Cini Foundation in Venice, and a well known scholar of Boccaccio. He made his sensational discovery in an antiquary shop in Borgo S. Jacopo, Florence. The 80 page manuscript is completely handwritten and numbered by Poliziano; it has been acquired by the Giorgio Cini Foundation. The account of the discovery and a technical description of the manuscript are to be found in the quarterly *Lettere Italiane*.

CARLO CRIVELLI'S complete collection of paintings was assembled for the first time at the exhibit which opened last June in the Ducal Palace in Venice.

THE "VIAREGGIO" Prize for 1961 was assigned to Alberto Moravia for the novel *La noia* (sec. I.Q. vol. IV, no. 16, p. 58); the "Viareggio Opera Prima" was awarded to Lorenza Mazzetti for *Il cielo cade*.

THE "FILA" PRIZE was awarded to Giacomo Debenedetti, author of *Saggi critici*, *16 Ottobre 1943*, *Otto ebrei*.

THE ST. VINCENT Film Prize, the "Grolle d'oro", was awarded to Luchino Visconti for "Rocco e i suoi fratelli", and to the actors Monica Vitti for "L'avventura" and Alberto Sordi for "Tutti a casa".

VITALIANO BRANCATI'S *Diario Romano* was posthumously published by Bompiani under the title *Il lettore di professione*. Feltrinelli has

just published the collected essays on contempory literatures of Paolo Milano. These writings had previously appeared in the literary column of *L'Espresso*.

THE "MIRACLE" of Italy seems to be taking on more and more the aspect of a permanent situation. In the first quarter of 1961 industrial production rose 10 per cent compared with the same production in the three months of 1960.

CURZIO MALAPARTE'S last wish that he be buried atop Mount Spazzavento overlooking his native Prato was finally fulfilled. The body of the writer was transfered from the cemetery of Prato to his final resting place on July 19.

THE MINISTRY of Foreign Affairs has announced a competition for a monograph dealing with the Italian Risorgimento in the period 1848-1861. The competition is opened to scholars of any nationality and may be written in any language. Five copies of the manuscript, typed, are to be sent to Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Direzione Generale delle Relazioni Culturali, Ufficio II, Rome, by registered mail and must be submitted on or before June 30, 1962.

The winner, chosen by a Committee appointed by the Ministry, will receive a prize of 2,000,000 Lire and a gold medal. The monograph may deal with a single individual or event but must give evidence of originality.

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